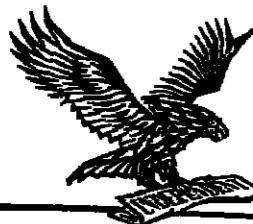


Sussex  
set up  
for next  
season



# THE INDEPENDENT

N° 3,375

THURSDAY 14 AUGUST 1997

WEATHER: Warm and sunny with sharp showers

(245p) 40p

THE ONLY FULL OFFICIAL UCAS  
A-LEVEL LISTINGS  
80-PAGE SUPPLEMENT INSIDE TODAY



PLUS: THE INDEPENDENT'S £2.5 MILLION  
STUDENT PROMOTION  
DAY ONE: 20,000 FREE CD'S

see pages 78+79 of UCAS listings (open only to UCAS applicants)

# Victory! Change of heart to help students

Judith Judd and Lucy Ward

Ministers last night backed down over plans to force most students taking a gap year before university to pay tuition fees. The decision was announced as examination boards revealed record pass-rates for this year's A-level exams.

The education minister Baroness Blackstone said that all 19,000 students who had received deferred offers of university places for 1998 would be exempt throughout their courses from the Government's decision to charge £1,000-a-year tuition fees and abolish maintenance grants.

Ministers said at the weekend that only those students who did at least three months' voluntary work would be exempt – around 2,000. But the announcement led to protests from charities, students and university administrators who predicted chaos as thousands of applicants tried to get into university this year.

The National Union of Students said that it would back a legal challenge on behalf of students taking a "gap year", claiming that it would be a breach of contract to charge them tuition fees.

The change of heart came as the annual scramble for university places began with the publication of this year's A-level results, distributed to candidates today. The pass rate is up by 1.3 per cent to 87.1 per cent, the 16th successive rise. However, the percentage awarded an A grade has remained the same, at 16 per cent.

There is a strong case in natural justice that the 19,000 or so students accepted for 1998 were accepted on existing financial terms and should be allowed to matriculate on 1997's conditions.

Yesterday's *Independent* advised

Students who have failed to get the grades they need to meet their conditional offers of places can enter the clearing process run by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) which matches students to spare places.

This morning there are 24,000 courses with vacancies in British universities and higher education colleges – an increase of 19 per cent on last year. The rise could be the result of an increase in the total number of courses. The biggest increase is in modern languages, which account for more than 15 per cent of all vacancies, and in engineering and business.

News of the improved pass-rate prompted the annual controversy over exam standards. The Institute of Management warned that employers were increasingly concerned about the value of "Britain's gold standard".

But Baroness Blackstone said: "We are absolutely committed to maintaining standards in all national qualifications. There are rigorous procedures in place to ensure that standards are maintained between examinations boards, between subjects from year to year."

The U-turn by ministers over

gap-year students should make the clearing process less frenetic than had been expected.

David Willetts, Conservative education spokesman, said that the Government had conducted a "complete shambles. They began by denouncing people's concerns over this as 'scaremongering', he said. "Then they announced, on an unattributable basis, a concession that turned out to be tiny.

"They have caused unnecessary concern and anxiety to thousands of students by their incompetence."

Government sources said that the decision had been taken "in the interests of fairness and administrative simplicity". They had always intended to look at the issue but had no firm figures until last Friday. "We have listened to representations made by industry and voluntary groups. This is an example of a listening government," the sources said.

But the national volunteer agency, Community Service Volunteers, called for a year's exemption from fees for every young person who invested between four and twelve months in service to the community during a gap year. Ministers are understood to be considering the suggestion.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, who wrote to David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, calling for a rethink over the fee waiver, welcomed the Government's announcement.

Letters, page 13

Ministers last night backed down over plans to force most students taking a gap year before university to pay tuition fees. The decision was announced as examination boards revealed record pass-rates for this year's A-level exams.

The education minister Baroness Blackstone said that all 19,000 students who had received deferred offers of university places for 1998 would be exempt throughout their courses from the Government's decision to charge £1,000-a-year tuition fees and abolish maintenance grants.

Ministers said at the weekend that only those students who did at least three months' voluntary work would be exempt – around 2,000. But the announcement led to protests from charities, students and university administrators who predicted chaos as thousands of applicants tried to get into university this year.

The National Union of Students said that it would back a legal challenge on behalf of students taking a "gap year", claiming that it would be a breach of contract to charge them tuition fees.

The change of heart came as the annual scramble for university places began with the publication of this year's A-level results, distributed to candidates today. The pass rate is up by 1.3 per cent to 87.1 per cent, the 16th successive rise. However, the percentage awarded an A grade has remained the same, at 16 per cent.

The U-turn by ministers over

gap-year students should make the clearing process less frenetic than had been expected.

David Willetts, Conservative education spokesman, said that the Government had conducted a "complete shambles. They began by denouncing people's concerns over this as 'scaremongering', he said. "Then they announced, on an unattributable basis, a concession that turned out to be tiny.

"They have caused unnecessary concern and anxiety to thousands of students by their incompetence."

Government sources said that the decision had been taken "in the interests of fairness and administrative simplicity". They had always intended to look at the issue but had no firm figures until last Friday. "We have listened to representations made by industry and voluntary groups. This is an example of a listening government," the sources said.

But the national volunteer agency, Community Service Volunteers, called for a year's exemption from fees for every young person who invested between four and twelve months in service to the community during a gap year. Ministers are understood to be considering the suggestion.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, who wrote to David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, calling for a rethink over the fee waiver, welcomed the Government's announcement.

Letters, page 13

Ministers last night backed down over plans to force most students taking a gap year before university to pay tuition fees. The decision was announced as examination boards revealed record pass-rates for this year's A-level exams.

The education minister Baroness Blackstone said that all 19,000 students who had received deferred offers of university places for 1998 would be exempt throughout their courses from the Government's decision to charge £1,000-a-year tuition fees and abolish maintenance grants.

Ministers said at the weekend that only those students who did at least three months' voluntary work would be exempt – around 2,000. But the announcement led to protests from charities, students and university administrators who predicted chaos as thousands of applicants tried to get into university this year.

The National Union of Students said that it would back a legal challenge on behalf of students taking a "gap year", claiming that it would be a breach of contract to charge them tuition fees.

The change of heart came as the annual scramble for university places began with the publication of this year's A-level results, distributed to candidates today. The pass rate is up by 1.3 per cent to 87.1 per cent, the 16th successive rise. However, the percentage awarded an A grade has remained the same, at 16 per cent.

The U-turn by ministers over

gap-year students should make the clearing process less frenetic than had been expected.

David Willetts, Conservative education spokesman, said that the Government had conducted a "complete shambles. They began by denouncing people's concerns over this as 'scaremongering', he said. "Then they announced, on an unattributable basis, a concession that turned out to be tiny.

"They have caused unnecessary concern and anxiety to thousands of students by their incompetence."

Government sources said that the decision had been taken "in the interests of fairness and administrative simplicity". They had always intended to look at the issue but had no firm figures until last Friday. "We have listened to representations made by industry and voluntary groups. This is an example of a listening government," the sources said.

But the national volunteer agency, Community Service Volunteers, called for a year's exemption from fees for every young person who invested between four and twelve months in service to the community during a gap year. Ministers are understood to be considering the suggestion.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, who wrote to David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, calling for a rethink over the fee waiver, welcomed the Government's announcement.

Letters, page 13

Ministers last night backed down over plans to force most students taking a gap year before university to pay tuition fees. The decision was announced as examination boards revealed record pass-rates for this year's A-level exams.

The education minister Baroness Blackstone said that all 19,000 students who had received deferred offers of university places for 1998 would be exempt throughout their courses from the Government's decision to charge £1,000-a-year tuition fees and abolish maintenance grants.

Ministers said at the weekend that only those students who did at least three months' voluntary work would be exempt – around 2,000. But the announcement led to protests from charities, students and university administrators who predicted chaos as thousands of applicants tried to get into university this year.

The National Union of Students said that it would back a legal challenge on behalf of students taking a "gap year", claiming that it would be a breach of contract to charge them tuition fees.

The change of heart came as the annual scramble for university places began with the publication of this year's A-level results, distributed to candidates today. The pass rate is up by 1.3 per cent to 87.1 per cent, the 16th successive rise. However, the percentage awarded an A grade has remained the same, at 16 per cent.

The U-turn by ministers over

gap-year students should make the clearing process less frenetic than had been expected.

David Willetts, Conservative education spokesman, said that the Government had conducted a "complete shambles. They began by denouncing people's concerns over this as 'scaremongering', he said. "Then they announced, on an unattributable basis, a concession that turned out to be tiny.

"They have caused unnecessary concern and anxiety to thousands of students by their incompetence."

Government sources said that the decision had been taken "in the interests of fairness and administrative simplicity". They had always intended to look at the issue but had no firm figures until last Friday. "We have listened to representations made by industry and voluntary groups. This is an example of a listening government," the sources said.

But the national volunteer agency, Community Service Volunteers, called for a year's exemption from fees for every young person who invested between four and twelve months in service to the community during a gap year. Ministers are understood to be considering the suggestion.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, who wrote to David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, calling for a rethink over the fee waiver, welcomed the Government's announcement.

Letters, page 13

Ministers last night backed down over plans to force most students taking a gap year before university to pay tuition fees. The decision was announced as examination boards revealed record pass-rates for this year's A-level exams.

The education minister Baroness Blackstone said that all 19,000 students who had received deferred offers of university places for 1998 would be exempt throughout their courses from the Government's decision to charge £1,000-a-year tuition fees and abolish maintenance grants.

Ministers said at the weekend that only those students who did at least three months' voluntary work would be exempt – around 2,000. But the announcement led to protests from charities, students and university administrators who predicted chaos as thousands of applicants tried to get into university this year.

The National Union of Students said that it would back a legal challenge on behalf of students taking a "gap year", claiming that it would be a breach of contract to charge them tuition fees.

The change of heart came as the annual scramble for university places began with the publication of this year's A-level results, distributed to candidates today. The pass rate is up by 1.3 per cent to 87.1 per cent, the 16th successive rise. However, the percentage awarded an A grade has remained the same, at 16 per cent.

The U-turn by ministers over

gap-year students should make the clearing process less frenetic than had been expected.

David Willetts, Conservative education spokesman, said that the Government had conducted a "complete shambles. They began by denouncing people's concerns over this as 'scaremongering', he said. "Then they announced, on an unattributable basis, a concession that turned out to be tiny.

"They have caused unnecessary concern and anxiety to thousands of students by their incompetence."

Government sources said that the decision had been taken "in the interests of fairness and administrative simplicity". They had always intended to look at the issue but had no firm figures until last Friday. "We have listened to representations made by industry and voluntary groups. This is an example of a listening government," the sources said.

But the national volunteer agency, Community Service Volunteers, called for a year's exemption from fees for every young person who invested between four and twelve months in service to the community during a gap year. Ministers are understood to be considering the suggestion.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, who wrote to David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, calling for a rethink over the fee waiver, welcomed the Government's announcement.

Letters, page 13

Ministers last night backed down over plans to force most students taking a gap year before university to pay tuition fees. The decision was announced as examination boards revealed record pass-rates for this year's A-level exams.

The education minister Baroness Blackstone said that all 19,000 students who had received deferred offers of university places for 1998 would be exempt throughout their courses from the Government's decision to charge £1,000-a-year tuition fees and abolish maintenance grants.

Ministers said at the weekend that only those students who did at least three months' voluntary work would be exempt – around 2,000. But the announcement led to protests from charities, students and university administrators who predicted chaos as thousands of applicants tried to get into university this year.

The National Union of Students said that it would back a legal challenge on behalf of students taking a "gap year", claiming that it would be a breach of contract to charge them tuition fees.

The change of heart came as the annual scramble for university places began with the publication of this year's A-level results, distributed to candidates today. The pass rate is up by 1.3 per cent to 87.1 per cent, the 16th successive rise. However, the percentage awarded an A grade has remained the same, at 16 per cent.

The U-turn by ministers over

gap-year students should make the clearing process less frenetic than had been expected.

David Willetts, Conservative education spokesman, said that the Government had conducted a "complete shambles. They began by denouncing people's concerns over this as 'scaremongering', he said. "Then they announced, on an unattributable basis, a concession that turned out to be tiny.

"They have caused unnecessary concern and anxiety to thousands of students by their incompetence."

Government sources said that the decision had been taken "in the interests of fairness and administrative simplicity". They had always intended to look at the issue but had no firm figures until last Friday. "We have listened to representations made by industry and voluntary groups. This is an example of a listening government," the sources said.

But the national volunteer agency, Community Service Volunteers, called for a year's exemption from fees for every young person who invested between four and twelve months in service to the community during a gap year. Ministers are understood to be considering the suggestion.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, who wrote to David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, calling for a rethink over the fee waiver, welcomed the Government's announcement.

Letters, page 13

Ministers last night backed down over plans to force most students taking a gap year before university to pay tuition fees. The decision was announced as examination boards revealed record pass-rates for this year's A-level exams.

The education minister Baroness Blackstone said that all 19,000 students who had received deferred offers of university places for 1998 would be exempt throughout their courses from the Government's decision to charge £1,000-a-year tuition fees and abolish maintenance grants.

Ministers said at the weekend that only those students who did at least three months' voluntary work would be exempt – around 2,000. But the announcement led to protests from charities, students and university administrators who predicted chaos as thousands of applicants tried to get into university this year.

The National Union of Students said that it would back a legal challenge on behalf of students taking a "gap year", claiming that it would be a breach of contract to charge them tuition fees.

The change of heart came as the annual scramble for university places began with the publication of this year's A-level results, distributed to candidates today. The pass rate is up by 1.3 per cent to 87.1 per cent, the 16th successive rise. However, the percentage awarded an A grade has remained the same, at 16 per cent.

The U-turn by ministers over

gap-year students should make the clearing process less frenetic than had been expected.

David Willetts, Conservative education spokesman, said that the Government had conducted a "complete shambles. They began by denouncing people's concerns over this as 'scaremongering', he said. "Then they announced, on an unattributable basis, a concession that turned out to be tiny.

"They have caused unnecessary concern and anxiety to thousands of students by their incompetence."

Government sources said that the decision had been taken "in the interests of fairness and administrative simplicity". They had always intended to look at the issue but had no firm figures until last Friday. "We have listened to representations made by industry and voluntary groups. This is an example of a listening government," the sources said.

But the national volunteer agency, Community Service Volunteers, called for a year's exemption from fees for every young person who invested between four and twelve months in service to the community during a gap year. Ministers are understood to be considering the suggestion.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, who wrote to David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, calling for a rethink over the fee waiver, welcomed the Government's announcement.

Letters, page 13

Ministers last night backed down over plans to force most students taking a gap year before university to pay tuition fees. The decision was announced as examination boards revealed record pass-rates for this year

## news

## significant shorts

**City leaders call for action to stop London sinking**

London's business and political leaders united yesterday to urge the Government to act over the rise in London's ground water levels which could cause widespread damage to communications systems, property and the underground. The city lies on a water basin and ground water is rising by as much as three metres a year. The damage could begin within five to ten years and cost billions of pounds.

A coalition including Sir Roger Coker, the Lord Mayor of London, and the chairman of the London Underground, Peter Ford, has written to the John Prescott asking him to take overall responsibility for implementing a "water policy". London Underground already has to deal with regular flooding in parts of its network and has to pump 14 million litres of water from the system every day.

From 1850 for about 100 years, industries abstracted water from their own use, keeping the water table manageably low. But in the Sixties, heavy users either relocated out of London or closed down. Water levels have risen by 35m in 30 years. Kate Watson-Smyth ■ Flash floods left a number of villages isolated and several roads closed in central Scotland last night. In Lanarkshire the village of Shotts was reported to be under a foot of water.

**Early release for IRA prisoners**

Dublin yesterday moved to reinforce republican confidence in the resumed peace process in advance of next month's multi-party talks by releasing two IRA prisoners.

The two were not amongst the most important prisoners and the Irish government decision, though less than a month after the latest IRA cessation, appears to be a minimal first step reflecting general caution following the abrupt ending of the first ceasefire in February last year. Gerard Burke, of Dublin, was serving four years for offences linked to a robbery. Thomas Flynn of Cork was jailed for six months for assault. Burke was due to be released next June and Flynn in October this year.

Alan Murdoch

**Ronnie Biggs digs in his heels**

Britain and Brazil opened the way yesterday for Great Train Robbery fugitive Ronnie Biggs (left) to be extradited when the two countries ratified a long-awaited extradition treaty. But there is no certainty that the 68-year-old will ever set foot on British soil. After originally saying that he would not try to fight extradition, Biggs vowed at the weekend that he would rather die than be brought back to jail in Britain. Years of legal wrangling in the Brazilian courts could be in prospect.

Brazil has a statute of limitation on crimes committed more than 20 years ago. Biggs has been on the run for 32 years after escaping from Wandsworth jail in 1965 while serving a 30-year sentence. Patricia Wynn Davies

**Field denies U-turn on war pensions**

Social Security minister Frank Field yesterday denied allegations from the Royal British Legion that the Government had broken pre-election pledges on war pensions. Veterans' leaders are furious about the Government's refusal to initiate a dedicated review on an anomaly that allows councils to deprive war pensioners of up to 75 per cent of their pensions by taking them into account when calculating means-testing housing benefit and council tax benefits. Mr Field said the onus for action was on the local authorities.

**Industrial action at Barclays Bank**

The union representing more than two-thirds of Barclays Bank staff today announces industrial action short of a strike to start next Thursday. The union, the UNIFL, is objecting to a newly imposed pay and grading scheme.

**Montague Lewis & Pickwick Records**

In the article "The BBC Lollipops treasure trove of great classics found in radio archives" (18 April) we wrongly stated that when the BBC entered a joint venture with Montague Lewis in 1990 to exploit its classical archives he was head of Pickwick Records. In fact, his 26-year involvement in that company had ended in 1988.

In 1994 Pickwick was granted a licence to market 100 discs of recordings from the archives and, contrary to the suggestion in the article, at that time it was already a wholly owned subsidiary of Carlton Communications plc. The BBC gave its approval to the packaging of these discs before their release.

We are sorry for any contrary impression given.

## THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

**OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
Austrie ... Sov. N. 1000  
Belgium ... 196. Italy ... 14,500  
Canada ... 18,300 Madera ... Esc325  
Cyprus ... 11,120 Malta ... 43 cents  
Denmark ... 16,18 Norway ... Nkr20  
Irel Rep ... 45p Portugal ... Esc325  
France ... Fr24 Spain ... Psc200  
Germany ... DM18 Sweden ... Skr21  
Greece ... Dr550 Switzerland ... Fr4,00  
Luxembourg ... JFr60 USA ... \$3,00

Overseas subscriptions  
Air mail, 13 weeks: Europe £13.00; US, 1st class £14.00;  
Asia, America, Africa and India £14.00; Zone 2, Far East and Australia £20.70. To order, please send cheque payable to Advertisers International Media Services Ltd, 143 Millbank, London SW1P 4SR or telephone 0171-538 6326. Credit cards welcome.

## BACK ISSUES

Back issues of the Independent are available from:  
Historic Newspapers, telephone 01968 840320.

## people



Dudley Moore with his wife Nicole on their wedding day

**Dudley Moore finds fourth time unlucky in love**

Dudley Moore's on-again, off-again marriage is off again, it emerged yesterday. The British-born star of the hit film *Arthur* has filed for divorce from his wife Nicole in Los Angeles Superior Court on the grounds of irreconcilable differences after months of public spats and charges of abuse.

In court papers, Moore said the paternity of the couple's two-year-old son, Nicholas, was in question and that there was a pending legal action to determine if he was the father.

The court action followed a reconciliation last month between the 62-year-old comedian and his 33-year-old fourth wife after she went on television and accused him of beating and terrorising her, making her take drugs and forcing her to dance for him in her underwear for up to 20 hours a day.

Nicole Moore filed a \$10m damages suit in May against her husband and announced plans to divorce him. He had already filed for divorce from her in 1995 but that suit was dropped.

In her damages suit against Moore, Nicole Rothschild Moore alleged that he repeatedly pushed, hit and choked her. She also alleged that he forced her to take amphetamines that led to her suffering a stroke.

Her lawyer, Kenneth Chyten, said at the time of the suit that Moore "had a strange power he was able to exert over her". Moore was arrested a month before the couple's April 1994 wedding for allegedly abusing her, but those charges were later dropped.

The diminutive actor, who has been based in Hollywood for the last 18 years, recently announced that he would return to Britain this year to star in *Parade's End*, his first pantomime role and a distinct change of pace and lifestyle. He will play Buttons in a production of *Cinderella* in Southampton and the production will move to the West End. ■ Kate Watson-Smyth

**Dietrich gives name to new Berlin square**

After years of debate over how to honour their famed daughter, Germans soon will be able to send a letter with a Marlene Dietrich stamp to a brand new Marlene Dietrich square in Berlin.

The stamp, good for mail within Europe, features a portrait of the legendary film star and cabaret singer with lips pursed and a sultry look in her eyes. It goes on sale today. Two weeks later, on August 28, Berlin officials are to give final approval to a plan to create a Marlene Dietrich square in the massive Potsdamer Platz complex under construction in Berlin.

Officials in the adjacent neighborhood of Schoeneberg, where Dietrich was born, signed on to the Potsdamer Platz initiative Wednesday, admitting their 5-year-old effort to agree on a suitable

piece of property to rename after her had failed.

Some residents, still bitter over Dietrich's support for the Allies in World War II, opposed any recognition for her in Berlin. "She betrayed our people," said Manfred Gräfe, 54, voicing a common opinion among respondents to a recent survey by the Berliner Morgenpost newspaper. More than two-thirds of callers opposed honoring the actress, who died in 1992.

Noel and Liam open up for BBC

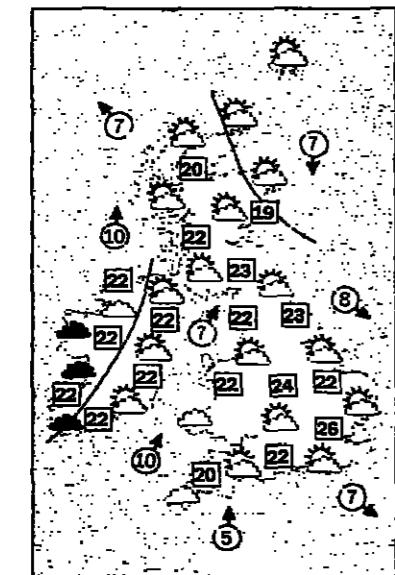
Despite his penchant for arthritic rock songs Noel Gallagher declares there is nothing for the youth of the Nineties to believe in anymore. In a documentary to be shown next week. Instead Noel and his brother Liam extol the virtues of having fun in Oasis: Right Here Right Now which will be shown next Wednesday on BBC1, the night before the band's new album goes on sale.

In their longest ever television interviews Noel denies being a spokesman for his generation although he admits: "We'd definitely be leading the march if there was anywhere to march to."

Liam says: "I want to have fun I'm 24 years of age and I'm in the most important rock and roll band in the world ... how could I not have fun? I've got a load of money, what am I going to do? sit at home and clip my \*\*\*\*\* toenails?"

Berlin, Associated Press

## WEATHER

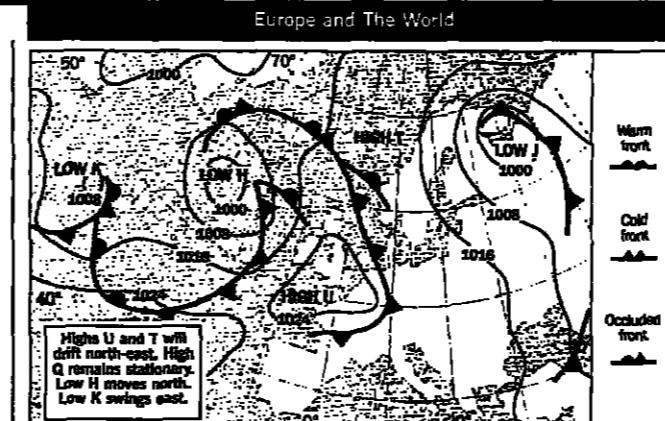


## The British Isles

## General Situation and Outlook:

Eastern Scotland will start cloudy with showers in the far north-east. It should soon turn drier and brighter with sunny spells and isolated showers. Northern Ireland and western Scotland will be bright this morning with good sunny periods, but it will slowly cloud over this afternoon with a little showery rain in the western fringes by evening. Meanwhile, England and Wales will be fair and warm with sunny periods, although there may be some coastal mist and low cloud around in the south-west.

England and Wales will be very warm tomorrow with plenty of sunshine, although cooling sea-breezes will affect the coasts. Southern and eastern Scotland should have a good deal of dry weather and some hazy sunshine, but western Scotland and Northern Ireland will be cloudy with showery rain. The weekend will stay mainly fine and settled with sunshine in most places. Western Scotland and Northern Ireland will be cloudier at times with a little rain.



## Europe and The World

## World Weather Yesterday, Midday (GMT): c.cloudy, f.fog, h.hazy, m.mist, r.rain, s.snow, t.thunder, previous day's figure at local time.

## AA Roadwatch

London, A11 Leytonstone Lane closures at A12 roundabout until August 1999.  
London, A306 Hemsworth Bridge. Closed until January 1998.  
Somerset, M5 J18-19. Lane closures both ways until further notice.  
Bristol, M5 J18-19. Contraflow near M1 J24, West Midlands, A41 Wolverhampton. Roadworks on B3 road and further notice.  
Merseyside, A56 Bootle Stanley Rd closed southbound until further notice.  
Tyne & Wear, A19 Newcastle Roadworks at Killingworth.  
West Yorks, M1 J47. Major long-term roadworks until July 2001.  
Leicestershire, A6 Lockington. Contraflow near M1 J24, West Midlands, A41 Wolverhampton. Roadworks on B3 road and further notice.  
Merseyside, A56 Bootle Stanley Rd closed southbound until further notice.  
Tyne & Wear, A19 Newcastle Roadworks at Killingworth.  
West Yorks, M1 J47. Major long-term roadworks until July 2001.

13.

Out and about with AA Roadwatch on 0838 401 for traffic news. Source: AA Roadwatch Information. Calls charged at 50p per minute at all times (inc VAT).

## briefing

## EMPLOYMENT

**Teachers steering men away from childcare**

Men are steered away from jobs in childcare by their teachers, according to a study of why 99 per cent of workers in the sector are women.

The report by researchers at the London University's Institute of Education reveals that women see childcare work less as a professional occupation than as a confirmation of their family and domestic experiences.

Women students felt the work was something they were "naturally good at", with the majority believing childcare training confirmed their maternal and domestic roles. That "presents some difficulties for men on the course", researchers found.

The study for the Department for Education and Employment suggests men experience more barriers getting into childcare training and were recommended by their teachers at school to do other kinds of work.

It also finds that many students, both men and women, who train for childcare have been low academic achievers. Lucy Ward

## WILDLIFE

**Frisbee, killer whale style**

Killer whales are using flat-wide sting rays to play frisbee before eating them, a scientist's study has revealed.

Like cats, killer whales are renowned for playing with their food. They appear to have invented the frisbee game to avoid being stung by the rays' barbed tails. The strange behaviour was observed by Ingrid Visser, a research student at Auckland University, who spent two years studying killer whales off New Zealand.

She watched 19 whales, mostly male, pursue and eat 55 stingrays, some of which measured two metres across. On one occasion two whales ate 18 stingrays in a six-hour binge.

Normally one killer whale would dive down to find a ray on the sea bed and then signal the others. Ms Visser had observed whales in water as deep as 120ft, often doing headstands.

The study was reported in *New Scientist* and said: "Sometimes a whale flips the ray out of the water before tossing it around like a Frisbee with at least one other whale. Visser says this may be an attempt to reposition the ray so the whale can eat it without being stung."

It was also thought adult whales may use the game to show youngsters how to tackle dangerous prey.

## TRAVEL

**Airport passengers at record high**

Major airports in the United Kingdom handled a record number of passengers last month, despite the British Airways' cabin crew strike, it was announced yesterday.

A total of 10.2m passengers passed through the seven airports run by the airport operator BAA in July 1997. This was an increase of 6 per cent on July 1996 and the highest monthly figure ever. BAA said.

The figure could have been even higher as BAA reckoned the three-day BA strike lost around 200,000 passengers.

The European charter market had the biggest growth last month - increasing 12.5 per cent and helping to boost Gatwick airport passenger numbers by 12.4 per cent.

## COMPUTERS

**Data spreads a bit of trouble**

Computer spreadsheets can be hazardous to your financial health, according to an American scientist who has found that the programs - widely used for all sorts of fiscal forecasting and planning - demand more accuracy than humans can provide. The result can cost companies hundreds or even millions of pounds.

Professor Raymond Panko of the University of Hawaii, Honolulu, discovered that people on average make a mistake typing data into one in every hundred "cells" - a location on a grid of a spreadsheet, which is a piece of software that can build up complex mathematical relationships between any cell. Spreadsheets are routinely used, for example, to analyse variations in financial performance or predict the effect of interest rate changes.

But spreadsheets can be so complex, and rely so heavily on data from a particular cell, that a single error can be disastrous.

Professor Panko found over the course of a decade that 30 per cent of all spreadsheets he has examined contain flaws - some serious. If a quantity is entered incorrectly, or the formula linking one cell to another is written wrongly, the result can be far from correct.

"Human beings do not often," he says in today's *New Scientist*. "But in large spreadsheets with many hundreds of cells, the normal human error rate is fatal."

Charles Arthur

## SCIENCE

**Jupiter whips up 380mph winds**

The next time gales wreak havoc with our lives, it may be helpful to remember that the winds on Jupiter make our storms seem like mild breezes by comparison.

Data that has emerged from the *Galileo* probe, which parachuted into Jupiter's thick atmosphere in December 1995, shows that Jovian winds can blow at up to 380mph. It shows wind speeds picking up with depth and reaching much greater velocities than had been estimated.

Scientists led by David Atkinson, from the University of Idaho in Moscow, USA, published their findings yesterday in the science journal *Nature*. The cause of the high winds is a mystery. "Whether these winds are driven by internal heat or absorbed sunlight remains uncertain," wrote the scientists.

## HEALTH

**Molecule clue to breast cancer**

Scientists have identified a molecule present in most breast cancers which appears to control the growth of cancer cells and could point the way to new treatments. Studies show levels of the molecule, called Brk, are higher in two-thirds of breast cancers but absent in normal breast tissue.

The finding, published in *Oncogene*, was made by a team at the Institute of Cancer Research. Dr Mark Crompton, leader of the team, said: "With further research, it may be possible to develop drugs that target Brk directly, thus stunting the tumour's growth, without impacting surrounding healthy cells."

Jeremy Laurance

## Read

## THE INDEPENDENT

14 AUGUST 1997

£1.99

Call 0800 376 5376

or visit [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)

or write to [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)

or fax to 0800 376 5376

# Strong pound sends shellfish trade plunging to the depths

Louise Jury

The British shellfish industry has been plunged into crisis by the strong pound, raising fears that half its fishermen and wholesalers will go bust by the end of the year.

Britain traditionally exports most of its catch and is making huge efforts to expand its home market in a bid to try to mitigate the problems with tough export markets.

But despite growing interest in molluscs and crustaceans by the British consumer, fisherman fear that it will not be enough to offset the slump in trade abroad.

Jim Partridge, of the Monteum fish company in Shoreham, Sussex, said: "If something doesn't happen soon, I would expect 50 per cent of fisherman and 50 per cent of merchants to go out of business by the end of the year."

Dr Clive Askew, of the Shellfish Association, which represents 400 retailers and fisherman from Scotland to Cornwall, said: "The news we get from around the coast is that it's very serious."

Mr Partridge said the pound

had risen so quickly that the margins they built in to absorb such increases were wiped out. Sometimes they were receiving less money than the fish were sold for.

The problem was compounded by the sluggish economies of France and Spain, the biggest markets for shellfish in the past, but whose populations could no longer afford to eat out as often as they once did.

In previous summers, the French would take a lorry-load of crab every day. This year it is one a week. "Europe is completely and utterly dead," Mr Partridge said.

Jeremy Brown, of Just Shellfish in Port Isaac, Cornwall, said prices usually levelled out after Easter at around £9 a kilo for lobster but were now hovering around £6.50 or £7. "We haven't seen prices this low in years and our expenses are the same as ever if not greater," he said.

And despite some optimism in the business about a growth at home, he did not hold out huge hopes for a growth in the home market. "I tried to sell fish door-to-door and there was very little interest. The average

housewife is put off by a bone. We don't eat fish or shellfish in Britain," he said.

Yet Dr Askew, from the Shellfish Association, said there were some signs of an interest in seafood, just as British cuisine in general has grown more adventurous in recent years.

"Supermarkets are looking very much more seriously at shellfish - some of it is to do with improving their image as they did by supplying wines."

But there would need to be a "huge boost" in Britain offset the drop in exports.

Last year, 116,000 tonnes of shellfish, with a value of nearly £138m, were landed in the UK, an increase of 10,000 tonnes over five years ago.

But the amount exported - 71,000 tonnes - has not changed over the same period.

British consumers are buying more to eat at home and when they eat out, although much of this is prawns not caught in British waters.

A spokeswoman for Waitrose, often regarded as the trend-setter in foods, said it had seen a significant increase in interest in shellfish in the last

five years.

"It's a very large market as far as we're concerned. We have 103 branches out of 115 with fresh fish counters which include shellfish," she said.

Stock includes fresh oysters,

mussels, scallops and langoustines.

Safeway sells pre-cooked British crabs and British oysters

and Marks and Spencer offer prawns and some small quantities of lobster at its London West End stores.

But fresh fish counters are still a rarity in high street supermarkets, and the number of fishmongers in Britain has declined significantly in recent years.

**Feeling the pinch:** Shellfish has declined in popularity since Victorian times, when oyster stalls, below, were common. Today, a strong pound has ruined the export market, and the natives turn their noses up at delicacies like this brown crab, above

Photographs: Andrew Hasson (top), Hulton Getty



## How the winkle lost out to the burger

Jack O'Sullivan

The strong pound may be destroying the shellfish industry, but its long term enemy is the British palate. The winkle pickers are gone, the jellied eel is a rarity, the whelk stall has all but disappeared. Burgers, chicken nuggets and chilled ready meals have ousted the ocean's own convenience foods from the everyday menu. We just don't seem to want shellfish anymore, which makes the exporters even more vulnerable to currency variations.

"Winkles and cockles used to be a regular feature of a Saturday and Sunday," says the famous Islington fishmonger, Steve Hatt junior. "People don't do it anymore." So yesterday in Fort William in the west of Scotland, the best of the shellfish

catch was not being bought locally. It was being collected straight from the boats by big Spanish lorries as they landed, to be consumed in Spain. "Most of what is landed here doesn't reach our shops," says Alan Brown, manager of the local Crannog Smoke House.

He also argues that the huge investment in equipment, including up to £100,000 for a reasonable boat, has driven up fishing costs. Then, says Steve Hatt, there is the expense of handling, purifying and transporting a food with a shelf life of perhaps five days, often too short for supermarkets.

"The good old whelk costs more now to handle that it was worth when it was caught."

But British reluctance to buy shellfish is rooted in a long-standing fear of food poisoning. "In the 19th century, there were crises over the rearing of shellfish and associated disease," according to Tom Jaine, editor of *The Good Food Guide*. "There was lots of legislation to control production." These fears have been enhanced amid concern about pollution and knowledge that shellfish accumulate toxins.

There is one rule when entertaining the Queen - never give her shellfish.

Indeed, though Elizabeth I introduced three fish days a week, this island nation has never taken full advantage of its marine resource. In 1863, WF Campbell, from Galloway, ob-

served that while his Scottish compatriots starved back home without properly harvesting the sea, the French poor consumed a huge range of creatures, particularly molluscs and shellfish.

Tom Jaine believes the British are unadventurous about food. "There is a tendency, more marked in the last century, to restrict the numbers of things considered edible. One presumes these restrictions are generally related to industrial development, distance from the land and from food production."

Emily Green, the food writer, is less charitable. "People are very suspicious unless it doesn't actually look like shellfish. So they will eat prawns which are

pink and packed in plastic and you won't hear them saying they are allergic to it."

"People say shellfish is complicated. But lobster is easy. You have to assault it a bit, but it is not complicated like owning a microwave or rehydrating space ice cream."

"The problem is that it's too real. It's alive. That can be scary. You have to do the killing. People are squeamish."

## Diehards gather for the Haj of the church of Elvis

David Usborne  
Memphis

Never mind that Geoff Cowley from Bradford lost his job as an international lorry driver just two months ago. He and his wife, Varna Marie, have had this trip booked for two years and nothing was going to stop them taking it. Mississippi, Memphis, Hawaii and Hollywood are where he made his films, but Mecca is here: Graceland, the Presley mansion in Memphis.

Each year there come, the diehards of the Elvis denunciation, to this surprisingly unimposing stone home with its ridiculous pillared portico and its kitsch interior of velvet couches and mirrored ceilings, to observe the anniversary of their deity's passing.

This year is special - Saturday is the 20th anniversary of the day when the by-then bloated and drug-dependent performer collapsed in his bathroom and died aged 42.

The gospel according to his fans tells us that Elvis did not die, that he staged his demise to escape his fans or the Mafia or both. "Elvis Lives!" Geoff and Varna, who otherwise seem thoroughly normal folk, know that the body now lying in the Graceland "Meditation Garden", filled with ornaments and crosses from fans, is a fake.

The Second Coming, in fact, may be at hand. Perhaps, we ponder over an ice cream, Elvis might descend from a helicopter over the mansion to



A photo of the infant crooner being auctioned by Bonhams

morrow evening when tens of thousands of his followers will be gathered around the house for a candle-light vigil. "That would be nice," Geoff observes casually, as if such an event would no more surprising than some old friend dropping by the pub unexpectedly.

Al Zapp from New Jersey confides that Elvis is already in Memphis. "He is one of the impersonators," he says. "He will have changed his face some, but he is here." Zapp himself is one of the myriad look-alikes flocking to Memphis this week. And he is surely one of the sorriest ones, with his chipped aviator sunglasses and sweat-stained rayon shirt. An Elvis riff wafts

out from the nearby Elvis Presley Memphis theme restaurant and Zapp instantly begins an Elvis leg-shake - like a dog having its tummy scratched.

Just in case the helicopter never shows, Elvis Presley Enterprises, the company that runs Graceland, will ensure fans get the next best thing at Saturday night's "Elvis in Concert '97" at the Memphis Coliseum.

With the magic of hologram technology, an apparition of Presley will rise up before the congregation and perform his most famous songs accompanied by some of his still-living former band members.

The real mystery of this re-

ligion is its power over so many. What is it that induces Geoff and Varna Marie and 900 other members of the British Elvis Presley Fan Club to spend their savings to come here?

Why are all these people, from around the world, crowding at the crazy-stone wall at the front of Elvis's state soaring vainly for just one square-inch space of virgin rock to scrawl their message of worship? "Elvis, we can't cry hard enough", and, "Twenty years - twenty million tears", and, "Most wanted you, Many needed you and All loved you, Michelle 1997".

Why are these women pressing five-deep at the stage of the downtown Daisy Theater on Tuesday night gasping for Darrell Dunhill, a 53-year-old from Florida, who works full-time as an Elvis impersonator? Occasionally, Darrell takes a nylon scarf and, just as Elvis did, mops the sweat from his chest and wraps it around the neck of one of the women. Delicious, she takes it as if it were communion itself.

Why are these women pressing five-deep at the stage of the downtown Daisy Theater on Tuesday night gasping for Darrell Dunhill, a 53-year-old from Florida, who works full-time as an Elvis impersonator? Occasionally, Darrell takes a nylon scarf and, just as Elvis did, mops the sweat from his chest and wraps it around the neck of one of the women. Delicious, she takes it as if it were communion itself.

Just in case the helicopter never shows, Elvis Presley Enterprises, the company that runs Graceland, will ensure fans get the next best thing at Saturday night's "Elvis in Concert '97" at the Memphis Coliseum.

With the magic of hologram technology, an apparition of Presley will rise up before the congregation and perform his most famous songs accompanied by some of his still-living former band members.

The real mystery of this re-

**BT's ISDN lines can download from the internet up to four times faster, so access time isn't excess time.**

*Why not change the way we work?*

**BT**

BT ISDN is a digital phone line, for £80 off connection

**Freefone 0800 800 800**

OFFER ENDS 12.10.97 ON LINES INSTALLED BY 9.11.97.





## news

# Science scores as A-levels boom

Judith Judd  
and Lucy Ward

More students than ever before are taking A-level exams, and the number choosing science subjects is rising, according to figures released yesterday by the exam boards.

Entries for physics and chemistry, both down last year, have increased this year and the improvement in the numbers taking maths continues. Other subjects whose entry also increased were English, computing, business studies and general studies.

The increases in science entries were small compared with those for arts subjects, but the rises could mark an upturn after years of concern over the unpopularity of science.

There were clear decreases in the percentage of entries for Economics (down 15.1 per cent) and French (5.7 per cent).

Kathleen Tattersall, convenor of the joint forum for the GCSE and GCE, said: "The continued upward trend in the entry for A-level against demonstrates the attraction of the A-level qualification to students who recognise its value as a passport to

higher education and employment."

David Moore, chief executive of the Association for Science Education, which represents science teachers, said he was encouraged by the results. "We think that youngsters are now seeing science as a useful career and we are seeing a degree of realism come back into their choices."

The proportion of entries awarded A grades remained the same. In some subjects, such as chemistry and economics, the percentage of candidates getting A's went up. In others, such as English and business studies, it went down.

Some exam board officials believe one reason why the proportion of A grades has levelled off is the increase in the number of modular courses, which include a series of tests throughout the course plus a final exam. It is more difficult



Bundles of nerves: A-level results at a London sorting office, ready for delivery to schools

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

NHS trust in court for putting staff at risk

Jeremy Lawrence  
Health Editor

An NHS trust is to be prosecuted next week for ignoring safety rules and putting patients and staff at risk from injury or contamination.

The Health and Safety Executive, which described the case as unprecedented, said it had uncovered an "amazing" catalogue of breaches of health and safety regulations in a routine inspection of the Swindon and Marlborough NHS trust last September. The trust runs the 500-bed Princess Margaret hospital in Swindon and three smaller hospitals.

The inspection found that laboratories handling dangerous pathogens such as tuberculosis could not be sealed, clinical waste was not separated from ordinary waste exposing staff to the risk of HIV and hepatitis infection from used needles, electrical equipment was badly maintained and the trust had no policy to prevent violence towards staff.

A spokeswoman for the Health and Safety Executive said the prosecution was the first to be brought against any trust where no accident or injury had yet occurred. There were so many breaches of health and safety regulations that the executive had no option.

"Normally, if there are a couple of things wrong, we would just ask management to put them right. But when you get a whole raft of problems which indicate that management have shown no regard to health and safety you have no option. We cannot have hospitals flaunting the regulations when there are vulnerable, sick and elderly people around."

The case will be heard by Swindon magistrates next Wednesday who have the power to impose a fine up to £5,000. However, if the case is referred to a Crown court the size of the fine is unlimited.

Yesterday, the trust, which has been given the go-ahead to rebuild the Princess Margaret hospital under a £145m private finance scheme, blamed its problems on a £40m maintenance backlog and said it had implemented a 64-point plan to improve safety since last September's inspection.

Frank Dobson warned hospitals yesterday to take a tougher line with patients who threatened or inflicted violence on staff. He told *Nursing Standard* magazine he was working on stiffer sentences for such offenders. "We will be working through the police and magistrates courts, to make sure the criminal justice system deals more severely with people who are involved in violence and assault on staff than the gravity of assaults. I think people would think that is only right."

A health department spokesman said hospitals were quick to call the police to incidents but slow to prosecute the perpetrators. "It is all about making sure offenders get prosecuted," he said.

Mr Dobson's remarks came as general practitioners reported an increasing risk of violence from patients. A survey in Nottinghamshire disclosed an incident in which female staff were threatened with mutilation by a patient who had been told he could not join the practice list.

Make your savings grow in leaps and bounds.

Reward Reserve gives you instant access to your savings at an attractive interest rate – up to 5.35% gross PA\*.

That's because we top up the basic rate with quarterly interest rewards, providing you've made no more than one withdrawal each quarter and kept a minimum balance of £2,000 in your account. Also, if you make no more than

three withdrawals in a year, we'll even add on extra annual interest reward.

You can open a Reward Reserve account with a minimum initial deposit of £2,000. To find out more, call us on the number below, or pop into any NatWest branch. So go on, jump to it.

Call 0800 200 400

MONDAY TO FRIDAY 8.00am TO 6.00pm SATURDAY 9.00am TO 5.00pm

**NatWest**

More than just a bank

\*The gross rate includes quarterly interest rewards of 1% gross per annum and an overall interest reward of 0.25% gross per annum. Where appropriate, lower rate tax, currently 20%, will be deducted on the interest paid (which may be reclaimed by certain non-taxpayers). Otherwise, for example, subject to the standard registration limit, interest will be paid gross. The gross rate is the rate before deducting income tax. Credit interest and quarterly reward interest is paid quarterly and annual reward interest is paid annually. All rates are subject to variation. We may monitor and record your phone calls with us in order to maintain and improve our service. National Westminster Bank Plc, Registered Office: 41 Lombard, London, EC2P 2BP. Registered Number: 529027 England. Ref Hau74

## Provisional A-level Results – June 1997 (UK Candidates Only)

Cumulative percentages of subject results by grade

Subject	A	B	C	D	E	N	U	Number of set	% of total no. set
<i>*Art and Design subjects</i>									
<i>Biology</i>									
Business Studies	7.6	26.7	50.2	71.4	88.2	94.9	100.0	33359	4.3
Chemistry	7.7	23.1	44.5	65.8	82.2	91.3	100.0	29100	3.9
Classical subjects	24.7	46.5	66.8	82.7	91.8	96.4	100.0	6451	0.8
Communication Studies	12.2	30.8	49.5	65.8	80.4	89.7	100.0	4783	0.6
Computing	9.7	22.6	40.8	60.4	77.6	88.8	100.0	12149	1.6
Economics	18.5*	33.8	52.5	70.5	83.8	91.9	100.0	20873	2.7
English	14.3	33.9	55.9	77.5	92.0	97	100.0	93546	12.1
Expressive Arts	10.2	26.9	50.8	72.5	87.7	94.1	100.0	10652	1.4
French	20.2	40.1	59.7	76.4	85.5	95.4	100.0	25916	3.7
General Studies	13.6	30.0	48.8	68.4	84.2	93.8	100.0	73114	9.4
Geography	12.0	34.0	57.2	76.6	89.8	96.8	100.0	43641	5.6
German	23.9	42.6	60.8	77.4	88.2	95.7	100.0	10561	1.4
History	14.7	33.9	54.5	73.2	86.5	93.9	100.0	42547	5.5
Home Economics	9.6	26.7	48.5	70.9	85.9	94.1	100.0	2512	0.3
Law	11.4	23.7	40.5	57.4	73.0	84.1	100.0	11550	1.5
Mathematics	27.0	47.2	64.3	78.3	88.7	94.8	100.0	69142	8.0
Media/Film/TV/Studies	10.3	28.3	58.5	80.8	93.5	97.8	100.0	11517	1.5
Music	19.2	40.0	64.0	82.6	93.6	98.1	100.0	6916	0.9
Other Modern Languages	30.4	54.2	71.3	85.9	90.9	96.0	100.0	5501	0.7
Physics	21.5	42.8	61.2	76.5	87.8	95.0	100.0	32508	4.3
Political Studies	13.8	36.9	59.9	78.0	88.6	94.2	100.0	10227	1.4
Psychology	11.0	28.4	47.8	68.2	80.6	90.2	100.0	27209	3.5
Religious Studies	14.1	33.1	57.0	77.4	89.8	95.6	100.0	9221	1.2
Science	11.4	26.8	48.4	68.5	85.2	94.8	100.0	5821	0.7
Sociology	11.0	26.4	47.2	68.5	84.9	95.7	100.0	50639	0.7
Spanish	24.2	46.3	65.2	81.0	90.4	95.7	100.0	5226	0.7
Sport/PE Studies	8.1	22.3	44.0	68.6	88.4	96.9	100.0	13102	0.7
Technical subjects	12.8	27.8	52.2	74.9	89.7	96.9	100.0	11640	1.5
Welsh	18.4	43.2	66.9	84.4	90.2	99.5	100.0	957	1.2
All Other Subjects	17.5	41.2	64.7	80.9	90.2	97.2	100.0	974	0.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>73.7</b>	<b>87.7</b>	<b>94.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>776175</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>(18.0)</b>	<b>(34.0)</b>	<b>(53.6)</b>	<b>(72.1)</b>	<b>(85.8)</b>	<b>(93.6)</b>	<b>(100.0)</b>	<b>(739163)</b>	<b>(100.0)</b>

\* These titles cover a range of related subjects

+ Science includes all science subjects except Biology, Chemistry and Physics

† Other Modern Languages includes all languages except French, German, Spanish and Welsh.

Upgrade the power of your wallet...

**DELL DIMENSION™ XPS M166s**  

- INTEL® PENTIUM® PROCESSOR WITH MMX™ TECHNOLOGY 200MHz
- 32Mb HIGH PERFORMANCE SDRAM
- 512Mb PIPELINE BURST CACHE
- 21Gb HD HARD DRIVE
- 3D NITRO 3D GX 64-BIT PCI GRAPHICS CARD WITH 4MB VIDEO MEMORY
- 15" COLOUR SVGA MONITOR (13.75" VIEWABLE AREA)
- 12/24X CD-ROM DRIVE
- INTEGRATED 16-BIT SOUND (ADPCM 3D STEREO)
- 200W RMS SPEAKERS (CS3.25S INC WAT)
- 3 PCI, 2 ISA AND 1 PCI/ISA SHARED EXPANSION SLOTS
- MID-SIZED DESKTOP CHASSIS
- MICROSOFT OFFICE 97
- SMALL BUSINESS EDITION

£999 (£1,203.20)  
DELIVERY & VAT INCLUDED



With its 32Mb SDRAM and 12/24X CD-ROM, it's already a powerful package. But buy a Dell Dimension™ XPS M166s now and you'll get even more: a free upgrade to a massive 200MHz Pentium® Processor with MMX technology. The offer closes 22nd August. So don't delay. Call the world's largest direct PC manufacturer\* now or log on to [www.dell.com/uk](http://www.dell.com/uk). And enjoy more power.

\*Source:  
 GET ONLINE TO THE INTERNET  
 08.70 - 15.20

To order online: [www.dell.com/uk](http://www.dell.com/uk)  
**DELL**

NHS  
trust in  
court for  
putting  
staff at  
risk

# Olde English images ousted by cool Britannia

**Michael Streeter**  
**and Kelly Pemble**

Great Britain plc is to be given a new, trendier marketing image in an attempt to attract more visitors to the country.

The influence of cultural champions such as rock band Oasis and the current theme of Cool Britannia will help create the new national logo, edging out the old "roast beef and royalty" view of the country.

However the British Tourist Authority yesterday denied reports that it is dropping the Union flag from its brand image altogether.

The marque, which will feature on the BTA's literature and brochures, will be unveiled next month after extensive testing of the new design with 21 focus groups. The £50,000 project is seen as important to the development of an industry which is already worth £40bn a year to the economy.

Mr David Quarby, chairman of the BTA, said: "Our research into visitors' perceptions about Britain has shown how much they appreciate the unique contrasts of the traditional and the innovative, our history and heritage but also our contemporary achievements in fashion, style and design."

"The brief for our designers was to capture these contrasts in one marque with which we can promote Britain abroad as a tourism destination."

The current logo features the BTA's initials alongside a Union flag. The London agency designing the new logo, Real Times Studio, yesterday said that it had not been specifically asked to keep the flag. "We were given a core booklet, which contained all the elements the BTA wanted looked at, and the Union Jack was not in it," said Annie Eaves, its development director.

Yesterday *The Independent* asked other creative agencies – at short notice – to come up with their own serious and humorous

ideas for a new badge of Britain. John Spencer, creative partner of Spencer Landor, favoured a design reflecting "cool authority", and said the flag ideally should be retained but used differently. "The image needs to be very professional, a bit like the perception of new Labour."

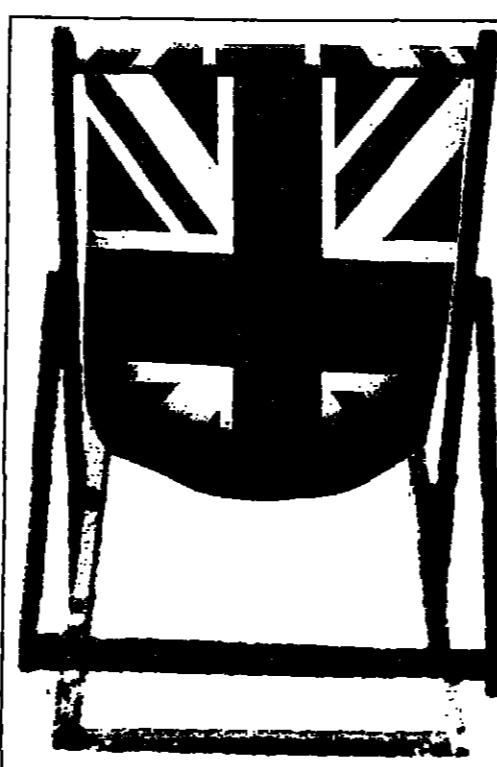
Other countries, even if they do not use the national flag, normally reflect their colours in their logos. The French have flashes of blue, white and red on their marque, in a "deliberate attempt" to keep the French flag as an identity, said Gillian Green, head of press for the French tourist office.

Spain's tourist logo depicts part of a painting by the Spanish artist Miro, but retains the country's colours of yellow and red. The Dutch tourist office does not display national colours – but uses a tulip instead.

Ireland's tourism office recently dropped plans to replace the shamrock with a new logo depicting two people with their arms outstretched in welcome. Critics condemned it as looking like sumo wrestlers preparing for battle. Australia uses sun, sea and kangaroos in their marque, but not the flag. Poland last year ditched its red, white and black logo, based on their national flag, and now use the word Polka with a graphic depicting the country's landscape.

What one insider described as the "freshening up" of Britain's overseas image was announced as another traditional British image came under threat – the footguards' bearskin. The Ministry of Defence announced yesterday it is carrying out another review of how to replace the need for real bears to make the headwear.

Lord Gilbert, the defence procurement minister, a noted animal lover whose wife Jean is a member of the fund-raising committee of the Worldwide Fund for Nature, is said to be concerned at the continuing use of the Canadian black bear.



Ins and outs: An image suggested by advertising agency Spencer Landor to promote Britain on the day a traditional image – the guardsman's bearskin – came under threat

However, though other animal-skin headwear made out of beaver and seal, has been abandoned in favour of synthetic materials, the Army has faced

difficulties in finding suitable alternatives to the longer-haired bearskins.

An MOD spokesman said: "In previous experiments, the hats

became rather bedraggled – like a bad hair day." The spokesman said they would rather use longer lasting synthetic materials but added that the skins come from

bears already culled by the Canadian government, and not from an endangered species. "A lot of them are knocked down on roads in places like Ontario any-

way," he added. The bearskin was first worn as an honour by the Foot Guards for their defeat of the French Imperial Guard, which wore bearskins, at Water-

loo. About 2,000 bearskins are worn, and 150 replacements are needed each year – coming from about 50 animals.

Leading article, page 13



## Two suspended in abuse inquiry

**Glenda Cooper**  
**Social Affairs Correspondent**

Two men working in local-authority children's homes have been suspended after allegations of abuse dating back to the 1960s, police said yesterday.

Northumbria police are trying to locate hundreds of former residents of council homes between the 1960s and 1980s who may have been affected. Allegations about other workers have also emerged during inquiries by police but they are dead or retired and no longer working with children.

One of the men suspended is employed by Newcastle City Council and the other by Northumberland County Council, but they have also worked

for other authorities. The investigation began after a 1970s resident of a Newcastle council home made allegations of abuse; subsequent inquiries resulted in more complaints being made. The inquiries are believed to span several local authority areas.

Police will be working closely with child-protection agencies, social services and health as part of the inquiry team.

The allegations involve not only sexual but also serious physical abuse and the investigation is likely to be "lengthy but it is not known how wide-ranging it may prove to be", a police spokeswoman said.

Police have set up an incident room number 0161 868680 for anyone who has information.

### DIRECT LINE INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNT

**UP TO 6.80% GROSS.**  
Small space.  
Big savings rate.

Balance	Annual Gross Rate
£1-£4,999	5.35%
£5,000-£9,999	5.70%
£10,000-£24,999	6.10%
£25,000-£49,999	6.50%
£50,000-£79,999	6.70%
£100,000+	6.80%



All rates correct as at 6 August 1997.

Call one of the numbers below for full details.

0181 667 1121    0161 833 1121    0141 221 1121

LONDON    MANCHESTER    GLASGOW

CALL ANYTIME 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday.

A Royal Bank of Scotland company. Please quote ref. IND97

Call may be recorded for your safety security. Direct Line and the red telephone box are registered trademarks of Royal Bank of Scotland plc. Rates subject to variation. Deposits and withdrawals via your bank account – allow 3 working days. Full terms and conditions of this account are available on request.

Every vacancy. Every course. Every university and college. Only in

THE INDEPENDENT and THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

UCAS listings available on the following dates: August - 14, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 31 & September - 3, 7, 10, 11.



Jewell in 150

independence 50 years on

# in Britain, Pakistan and India

**Border party may soothe the wounds of partition**

**Peter Popham**  
in Delhi

If the authorities permit it to go ahead, the most pregnant image to come out of India's celebration of 50 years of freedom could be an unprecedented demonstration of Indo-Pakistani brotherhood on the border between the two perennially warring countries.

For the second year running, an organisation called Citizens for Democracy plans to bus large numbers of fraternally-inclined Indians - the organisers predict about 2,500 people will turn up - to Wagah, some eight hours from Delhi, the only land crossing to Pakistan. Organisers on the Pakistani side, it is planned, will be doing the same thing. (Last year, due to a mix-up, no Pakistanis showed up.)

Stages will be constructed a few dozen metres from the crossing point, and participants from both sides will enjoy a programme of classical music and dance. Around midnight, if the guards allow it, a small contingent will be permitted to cross over and embrace those on the other side. It will be a symbolic way to assuage the wounds of Partition.

Meanwhile the commemoration in the capital will follow a more traditional course. Delhi is filling up with the impedimenta of a major public event: barriers, floodlights, marquees, chairs. But it is symptomatic of the apparently desperate haste with which the celebration has been organised that as recently as last week the event organiser which won the tender to stage the main show was bickering publicly with the sponsors, Delhi City Government, over the payment schedule, and declaring that unless it received more money up front it would be unable to import the required high-tech equipment from the UK.

Once the final wrinkles have been ironed out, however, Delhi should enjoy a grandstand seat at a celebration which will combine elements of the familiar, the spectacular and the emotional.

It will kick off at 9pm today with a "March of the Nation" along the main axis of Lutyens's New Delhi, from Nehru Stadium in the east to the park at the threshold of the Presidential Palace in the west, a distance of nearly two miles. Delhi City Government's Accounts Department allowing the march will culminate in a spectacular show for an audience of some 7,000 (plus several hundred million more on television), with mu-

sic and dance, fireworks and a laser show.

Shortly before midnight, the action shifts to the Central Hall of Parliament for the grave, profoundly traditional portion of the celebration where, in the presence of parliamentarians, ambassadors and the chief guest of honour, Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker of the House of Commons, a recording of Nehru's famous "Freedom at Midnight" speech will be played.

"Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge," those rarefied Harrovian vowels will enunciate once more.

"...At the stroke of midnight, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom..."

It was originally intended that Ms Boothroyd would speak during the ceremony, but the idea was scrapped after an MP of the Hindu nationalis BJP denounced it as "preposterously idiotic" to have a Briton speaking on what was "a quintessentially Indian night".

The following morning's main event is also comfortably familiar: at the Red Fort, the grandest monument of pre-Lutyens Delhi, the Indian white, green and beige tricolour will be hoisted and the prime minister, Mr I K Gujral, will make a

speech. Later tomorrow, at 3.30pm, yet another traditional anniversary item is scheduled. Richard Attenborough's pious *Gandhi* will be screened once more, this year preceded by an hour-long documentary on the making of the film.

Earlier in the day, however, Gandhi's name will be invoked with a different resonance when 150 slum children gather at the Gandhi Memorial in central Delhi, holding placards berating the government for failing to make good the promises of the freedom fighters of 50 years ago; to eliminate illiteracy, poverty and child labour.

**Artistic freedom: Dancing girls listen to an elderly freedom fighter at a ceremony in Delhi to honour the heroes of the independence struggle**

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

## 'Bandit Queen' threatens self-immolation

**Phoolan Devi**, the low caste "bandit queen" in the film of that name who last year became an MP, is threatening to disrupt India's Independence Day celebrations by setting herself on fire at the Parliament House.

Ms Devi is upset because a political enemy has decided to revive 55 cases pending against her, including charges of mass murder, which could bring to an end her new and comfortable life as a politician.

With her fine sense of theatre, Ms Devi has now seized the initiative with her threat to end it all. "Forgive me or kill me", she told a press conference in Delhi, "but do not humiliate me like this."

It is thought unlikely that Ms Devi will carry out her threat. But if she were to succeed in getting arrested in Delhi, it would keep her out of the grasp of the and give her a breathing space. Her bandit cunning has deserted her.



There are big things happening over at Little Chef. Right now you can get a mountainous two course meal for just £4.99.

That's a combination of a starter and a main course from the Meal Deal Menu. It's a mountain of a meal at a down-to-earth price.

Price indicated is per person. Subject to availability. We reserve the right to withdraw the whole or part of the promotion without prior notice.



**3 for 2**

Boots Special Beer Kits.  
Choose from Best Bitter,  
Extra Strong Bitter,  
Premium Pilsner.  
**£6.95 each**  
**£13.90 for any three**



New Soda Stream Fruits and Hints concentrates.  
**£1.09 each**  
**£2.18 for three**

Boots Universal Fit Water Filter Cartridges.  
Fits Boots, Brita and Kenwood Water Filters.  
**£3 each** **£6 for three**





**The Right Chemistry**

<http://www.boots.co.uk>

Offers available in most Boots stores from 6th August until 2nd September 1997. Subject to availability.



## inside north korea

# The Great Leader rules from beyond the grave

**Stephen Vines** in Pyongyang

**Cult figure:** North Koreans bowing before a memorial to Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang. The president died three years ago, but still dominates North Korea. Photographs: Stephen Vines

North Korea has not had a head of state or, more importantly, a leader of the ruling Korean Worker's Party for more than three years. From a Korean point of view, though, both these posts are filled, aside from the small technicality that their incumbent is deceased.

Kim Il Sung, the "Great Leader", died in July 1994, having led his country for almost half a century. He left a chasm which the North Korean leadership is wary of filling. "The President will live for ever, therefore the President's seat will always be empty," explained an official guide in front of a giant bronze statue of the late leader depicted with his hand outstretched to the people.

The late leader lives on in many ways. Every adult citizen wears a badge carrying his portrait. It is almost impossible to walk more than five minutes in any city without meeting a Kim Il Sung statue, hoarding, or a building named in his honour. This is a personality cult which dwarfs the cults of Stalin and Chairman Mao.

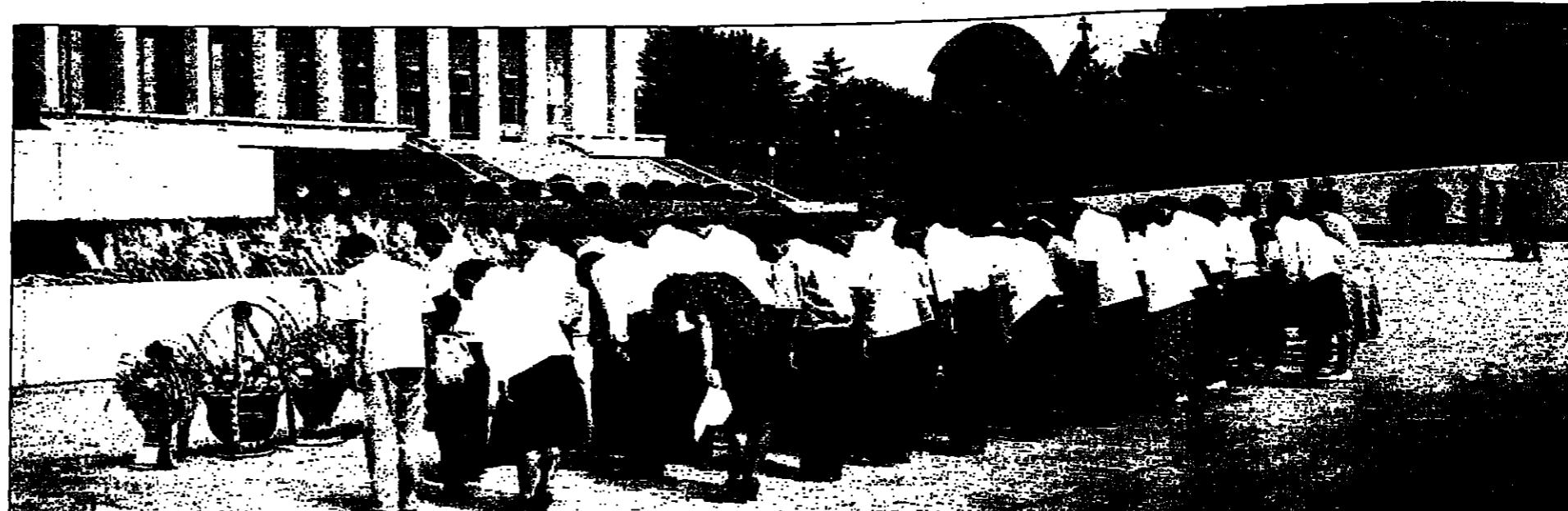
The cult is overwhelming and bizarre. At its apex stands the International Friendship Exhibition, located in the middle of the country at Mount Myohyang, one of Korea's most beautiful areas. Built in a traditional style (unlike most buildings which resemble the worst excesses of early Soviet brutalism), it is a gargantuan shrine to the Great Leader and to his son the Dear Leader. The twist to the shrine's story is that it is stuffed with "61,000 valuable presents", given to the two leaders by people from all over the world. A "spontaneous" poem by Kim Il Sung puts it this way: "The country ruined by cringing and subjected to so much suffering, is now thronged by goodwill missions from all lands." The re-

ality is that North Korea is probably the most diplomatically isolated nation on earth. The only mission "thronging" its doors are of aid donors trying to alleviate the economic disaster resulting from President Kim's rule. Reality is not allowed inside this sacred place, where shoes must be discarded and bowing before images of the Great Leader is not voluntary. Most of the population has been shepherded around the exhibition. It exists, it is claimed, as proof of the internationally popularity of the two Kims and it locates North Korea at the epicentre of world affairs.

Like every other successful Asian Communist leader, Kim Il Sung paid more attention to nationalism than to the international ideas of Karl Marx.

President Kim's hotch-potch theory, dignified in North Korea as the "Juche Idea", revolves essentially around the notion of self-reliance. Basically it says that Koreans can do anything they set their minds to. Then, remembering that Socialist internationalism ought to come into this, the Juche Idea generously suggests that the same principles apply to other peoples too. Bookshelves in North Korea are crammed with variations of turgidly written nonsense on this. To an outsider these seem gibberish, but they are studied with reverence by Koreans.

"Frankly speaking, 95 per cent of the people regard Kim Il Sung as their father," said the guide. It was not made clear what fate would befall the 5 per cent who had other views. However, it is becoming increasingly



**Cult figure:** North Koreans bowing before a memorial to Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang. The president died three years ago, but still dominates North Korea. Photographs: Stephen Vines

with *Newsweek* that the son will be formally inaugurated as president in October according to invitations that Russia has received. However, Kim Jong Il is but a shadow of his father. Brian Bridges, an expert on North Korea from Hong Kong's Lingnan University, describes him as a "dimwit". "He just doesn't have the intellect to run it all."

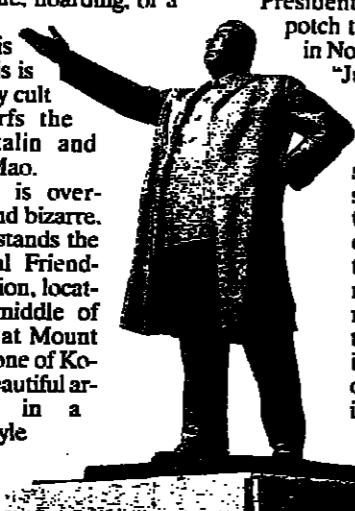
Kim Jong Il's late father erected a one-party state with Soviet assistance after the Second World War. Early days were dominated by the ruthless elimination of all opposition, and there is still no real dissent now. But Dr Bridges believes that the leadership cannot stay unchallenged for much longer. "The crunch must come in the

first half of 1998", he predicts. By then the food crisis will be out of control and, he believes, a part of the elite will break away and say "we really have to do something drastic". Foreign officials in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, are less sure that anything will happen so soon, though they accept the crunch will come and that the

last unblinking Stalinist regime will have to change in the end. "What you see right now is the unravelling of a system which must have been fairly good 20 years ago," one said. Nevertheless, he argues, "they can continue for a very long time. Believe me, these people still have trust in the leadership, their tolerance level is so high".

Kim Il Sung's megalomania and ego have survived his passing. As winter comes in a couple of months' time and the limited food supplies dwindle even further, the slivering people living out the Juche Idea might start to wonder just how well self-reliance is working.

■ This is the second article in a three-part series.



Bronze statue of Kim Il Sung

## Over the last year BT has cut the cost of calls to every country in the world.



THE WHITE PAPER ON HIGHER EDUCATION IS NOT ALL BAD NEWS. MR BLUNKETT FORGOT TO MENTION THE FREE CDS, VIDEOS & BURGERS.

For over £125 off CDs, videos, burgers and much more, take part in The Independent's £2.5 Million Student Passport to Independence competition. To enter, just get an entry form from Which Way? magazine, free with the paper on 18th August, and collect 7 tokens from The Independent and Independent on Sunday from the 14th August. 20,000 booklets available. Open to UCAS applicants only.

THE INDEPENDENT

Black's  
Hanes-Darwin  
Ipermagazines  
GRANADA  
TESCO  
HMV

No purchase necessary. Tokens available from The Independent offices.

The cost of reaching some destinations is now 40% less than a year ago. Join BT's PremierLine and Friends & Family schemes and you can save an extra 25% on top.

For information on BT's discounts call 24 hour Freefone 0800 003 800.

*The cost of calling keeps on falling*



PremierLine is suitable for customers spending more than £45 per quarter on calls and costs £6 per quarter. Excludes BT public payphone and BT Chargecard calls. Friends & Family is not available with the Light User scheme.



## obituaries / gazette

# Lance Barnard

Lance Barnard shook Australia during one of the most exciting periods in Australian politics, the fortnight in 1972 known as the "two-man government". His partner in this episode was Gough Whitlam, who led the Australian Labor Party to power in November of that year after 23 years in the electoral wilderness. Barnard was Whitlam's deputy leader, and the two men set about reforming public life at a pace that has never been equalled before or since.

Without waiting for the customary two weeks that it would normally take the newly-elected Labor MPs to gather and elect a front bench, as the rules then decreed, Whitlam and Barnard divided between themselves the entire spread of ministerial portfolios and fired off a volley of executive decisions that left Australians gob-smacked.

The outgoing conservative



Barnard: toll to Whitlam  
Photograph: Camer Press

Liberal-National coalition had been in power since 1949. It was tired, plagued by dull leadership and out of touch with a new generation of baby-boomer voters. For Labor supporters, the atmosphere was not unlike that of Britain in 1997, when the torpor of a sclerotic administration

was swept away and the excitement of a new political era unfolded.

The Whitlam-Barnard duumvirate became an earthquake under Australia's stolidly conservative political landscape. Whitlam held 13 ministries, Barnard 14, including defence, the portfolio that he retained when normality was restored after the full ministry was sworn in.

The duo's first act was to abolish conscription to the armed forces, which the conservatives had introduced eight years earlier to bolster Australia's controversial commitment of troops to the Vietnam war. Then they released draft dodgers from prison and announced that Australia's remaining soldiers in Vietnam would be brought home. The youth of Australia applauded.

Next, the two-man government abolished British imper-

ial honours down under and replaced them with an Australian honours system. They announced that Australia would recognise the People's Republic of China, thawing a Cold War diplomatic freeze, banned the granting of mining leases on Aboriginal reserves, refused entry of racially selected sporting teams to Australia and started moves to grant independence to Papua New Guinea, Australia's northern neighbour.

Gordon Bilney, then an Australian representative at the United Nations, and later a Labor minister, captured the excitement of those times when he said: "By the time the dum-dum-rate had been operating for a week, all I wanted was to get back to Australia as soon as I could. There were thousands like me, accustomed to cringing culturally when, as an Australian abroad, one was either thought of as an Austrian or as

a variety of South African, but who quickly found reason to take pride in what the new government was doing."

With a typical flourish, Whitlam described his interregnum with Barnard as "the smallest ministry with jurisdiction over Australia since a temporary British administration under the Duke of Wellington in 1844". Barnard himself was more down-to-earth. "It was the most interesting period of my life," he said. "This had never occurred before in the history of Australia. The public were, I think, pleased something was being done. We were sworn in on the Monday, on the Tuesday conscription had ended and I had arranged for national service personnel to leave the camps as they wanted to."

The remarks say much about the differences between these two unlikely partners. Whitlam was a "new Labor" man, a

lawyer who prided himself on his erudition and who found few close friends among his team. Barnard was a traditional Labor man, a teacher from Tasmania with no pretensions to match his leader's intellectual reach but whose practicality and unforgiving loyalty Whitlam treasured.

Whitlam, now 81, praised Barnard fulsomely on his death.

Barnard easily won his father's old seat at the 1954 general election and held it for 21 years. In 1974, he was unseated as deputy prime minister by Jim Cairns, a scion of the Left. The following year, Barnard told Whitlam he wanted to retire from politics. Whitlam appointed him Australia's ambassador to Sweden, Finland and Norway.

**Robert Milliken**

*Lance Herbert Barnard, politician; born Launceston, Tasmania 1 May 1919; Deputy Prime Minister of Australia 1972-74; Minister for Defence 1972-75; died Melbourne 6 August 1997.*

## Bill Shine

What set Bill Shine apart from most character actors was a readiness to have a go at anything which did not compromise his genial gusto.

In the classics or intimate revue, Ealing comedy or Victorian melodrama, Restoration comedy or English farce, his fine in affable loafers, military gentleman, vacuous dandies and dim-witted aristocrats made him one of the busiest and most popular of supporting players on stage or screen for almost seven decades. Toff or twerp, he did not mind, as long as he could register his brand of British or Irish fun. He had particular successes in Shaw, O'Casey and Paul Vincent Carroll – with that unpretentious zest and snappy timing that were part of his technical equipment.

One of the last players to understand the dramatic uses and abuses of a monocle in comedy, farce and pantomime (as squires and barons), Shine could disport himself in old-fashioned musical comedy with as much relish as he brought to Irish melodrama. He was, after all, born into the business.

His father Wilfred Shine ruled in melodrama of all sorts in the early part of the century and even while Billy was a boy, toured the Lancashire comedy The Jeffersons for seven unbroken years. In 1924 he brought it to London. To the critic James Agate's grief, it founded, not because it was a bundle of clichés, but because Londoners could not understand the humour of Lancashire as Ade did.

Apart from his notable father, Shine's mother, two uncles and aunt and grandmother were also on the stage. It was while learning his trade sweeping it or as call boy or watching from the wings that young Billy was judged qualified to make his

début. In 1917 he played a Stork in *Princess Posy* at the Winter Gardens, New Brighton.

At 15 he appeared with Sybil Thorndike and Charles Laughton at the Arts Theatre in George Moore's Shakespeare play, *The Making of an Immortal*, but far from going into the theatre Shine seized the chance to work in the talkies throughout the next decade, the Thirties. He made 164 British films between 1929 (*High Seas*, *The Flying Scotsman and Under the Greenwood Tree*) and 1971 (*Not Tonight, Darling*).

Highlights in between ranged from Sir Percy Blakeney in *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1934) to Ealing comedy, Tommy Trinder's *Chequered Charlie* (1944) to *The Red Shoes* (1948), *The Chiltern Hundreds* (1949), *Father Brown* (1954), *The Deep Blue Sea* (1955), *Richard III* (1955) and *Blue Murder at St Trinian's* (1957). One of his most characteristic supporting parts on screen was that of the wizard-prince type of public school RAF officer; though since he was making as many as four films a year (and usually also appearing on stage at night), Shine's talent for the cameo appearance was never easy to pin down.

During the Second World War, though, he was back on stage touring for the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (later to become the Arts Council) in a repertoire of plays headed by Shaw's *The Man of Destiny*. Then he joined what every playgoer then regarded as the next best thing to a national theatre, since subsidised theatre was then headed by Alec Clunes's Festival of English Drama at the Arts. It started with seasons of Farquhar, Sheridan, Pinero and Shaw, and Shine was in everything. I still remember him amusingly alighting on that tiny stage in a pair of angel's wings

which he made a fine Svengali and *The Bells*. How to avoid burlesquing such pieces while playing them for all they were worth? The audience could be as much of a nuisance as anything, giggling at every chance, yet silence was finally imposed by an indefinable theatrical power and Shine knew how to keep both his face and his acting straight.

A year later some of that power was felt again at the old St James's Theatre in London where he played Sewer Man to Marita Hunt's Mad Woman of Chaillot. Shine surely had something of his father's spirit in him. Even if most modern memories

recall first the handle-bar moustache, the upper-class accent and the gallery of well-intentioned bunglers, addle-brained aristocrats, amiable incompetents and a whole range of RAF types, eccentric clerics and charming loafers, Shine was trained in a school where the whole expressive countenance for theatrical expression. He had long since learned how to turn tailness, a sleepy-eyed look, a nimble carriage and a lean build to commandingly comic or arresting effect; whether as Lord Summersby in *Misalliance* (1943), Horace Vale in *The Magistrate* (1944), King Phillip II of Spain in *That Lady* (1951),

Lord Foppington in *Vanbrugh's Virtue in Danger* (1966) or Lord Littlehampton in *Maudie* (1974).

On television his most recent

part in the 1980s was that of the eccentric inventor Black in the series *Supergran*, with (of course) smoking jacket and cap. Clechés? Shine gave them a new sheen.

**Adam Benedict**

*Wilfred William Denis Shine, actor; born London 20 October 1911; married first Julia Lang (one son); marriage dissolved 1949, second 1949 Diana Cecil (née Marsh; one son); died London 24 July 1997.*

## Luther Allison

The death of the blues musician Luther Allison has come at a particularly poignant time, when he was making the best music of his career and being recognised as one of the leading exponents of the blues guitar. In May 1997 he had won three W.C. Handy blues awards including Blues Entertainer of the Year. This August Bank Holiday weekend he was due to headline the Great British R&B Festival at Colne, Lancashire.

With his new success, Allison had developed a potent blend of blues, soul, funk and rock 'n' roll. He often worked with a horn section and he was known for performing energetic, two-hour sets at festivals. In the UK, he played with success at both the Burnley Blues Festival and the Great British R&B Festival. Allison was born in Mayflower, Arkansas, in 1939. He was the 14th of 15 children and his father and brothers worked in the cottonfields. In 1951 the family moved to Chicago and Luther found himself at school with Muddy Waters' son. His brother Ollie was already working as a blues musician and Luther started playing his guitar. He also accompanied some of his other brothers in a gospel group, the Southern Travellers.

In 1957 a blues group was formed to play the Bungalow Club in Chicago. The line-up included Luther and his brother Grant, and they called them,

selves the Rolling Stones, after a Muddy Waters' song. They soon tired of the name and became the Four Jivers. Allison was becoming a skilled guitarist, influenced by B.B. King and Otis Rush, and he was encouraged to sing by Freddie King. When King found work outside Chicago, he took over his residency at a local club.

Luther also jammed on stage with Howlin' Wolf and for several years was a blues journeyman, working with Little Richard, Magic Slim and Mud-Water Waters.

In 1967 he achieved some national recognition through the compilation album *Sweet Home Chicago*, for Delmark Records. This prompted Delmark to record an album, *Love Me Mama*, with him and his then group, the Blue Nebulae, in 1969. The label's manager, Bob Koester, said that he believed Allison to be "one of the most original exponents of the modern blues". The same year he appeared at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival and played on the albums *Further On Up*, *The Road by Shake Jake Harris and Slim's Got This Thing Goin' On* by Sunnyland Slim.

Solo success seemed possible when he became the first – and, in the event, the only – blues to sign with the flambo-Motown label, but the organisation did not know how to promote the three albums he made for their subsidiary, in 17 years. The maga-



'I'm unstoppable': Allison at the 100 Club, London in 1988

Photograph: Dave Peabody / Redferns

zine *Guitar Player* thought it combined "the wisdom of a master storyteller with the elegance of B.B. King, the elasticity of Buddy Guy and the big sting of Albert King". The second album, *Blue Streak* (1995), topped the US blues charts for 19 weeks. Acknowledging the applause at the Chicago Blues Festival, he shouted, "I'm not

only back. I'm unstoppable." On 10 July while performing on stage, Luther Allison fell dizzy and lost co-ordination. He was taken to hospital where he was diagnosed as having inoperable lung cancer. He cancelled appearances and in order to help with medical bills, a fund-raising night at the 100 Club in London had just been arranged

only back. I'm unstoppable." On 10 July while performing on stage, Luther Allison fell dizzy and lost co-ordination. He was taken to hospital where he was diagnosed as having inoperable lung cancer. He cancelled appearances and in order to help with medical bills, a fund-raising night at the 100 Club in London had just been arranged

His best epitaph would be a line from a *Guitar Player* review: "He hung in the balance". **Spencer Leigh**

*Luther Allison, singer and guitarist; born Mayflower, Arkansas 17 August 1939; married (one son); died Madison, Wisconsin 12 August 1997.*

## Drummond Matthews

In 1955-57 I shared a small lab with Drummond Matthews at the FIDS base on Signy Island in the South Orkneys, wrote W.L.N. Tickell.

Bob White's obituary [1 Aug]

was rather dismissive of the Antarctic experience. Matthews quickly became a resourceful and resolute polar traveller and his knowledge of Coronation Island was equalled only by that of his companion and surveyor, Dougles Bridger. In the southern wind-

ter of 1956 fast ice did not form in the South Orkneys, so it was not possible to sledge across the sea, but Matthews manhandled sledges over glaciers and mountains during three expeditions on Coronation Island. Matthews Island was named after him.

Before his PhD Drum

Matthews had already been the senior author of a FIDS publication that today remains a major work on the geology of the South Orkney Islands.

**Patrick Cosgrave**

*Tom Norman, businessman and politician; born 12 March 1917; MP (Conservative) for Cheadle 1970-87; UK Member of European Parliament 1973-79; MEP (Conservative) for Cheshire East, 1979-89; Kt 1987; married 1942 Annabel Yates (two sons, one daughter); died 6 August 1997.*

## Drummond Matthews

In 1955-57 I shared a small lab with Drummond Matthews at the FIDS base on Signy Island in the South Orkneys, wrote W.L.N. Tickell.

Bob White's obituary [1 Aug]

was rather dismissive of the Antarctic experience. Matthews quickly became a resourceful and resolute polar traveller and his knowledge of Coronation Island was equalled only by that of his companion and surveyor, Dougles Bridger. In the southern wind-

ter of 1956 fast ice did not form in the South Orkneys, so it was not possible to sledge across the sea, but Matthews manhandled sledges over glaciers and mountains during three expeditions on Coronation Island. Matthews Island was named after him.

Before his PhD Drum

Matthews had already been the senior author of a FIDS publication that today remains a major work on the geology of the South Orkney Islands.

**Patrick Cosgrave**

*Tom Norman, businessman and politician; born 12 March 1917; MP (Conservative) for Cheadle 1970-87; UK Member of European Parliament 1973-79; MEP (Conservative) for Cheshire East, 1979-89; Kt 1987; married 1942 Annabel Yates (two sons, one daughter); died 6 August 1997.*

**Lectures**

National Gallery: Kathleen Adler, "Approaches to the Portrait in 1920s Britain"; Epstein, Frampton and Lewis, 1pm.

British Museum: Angela Evans, "Sutton Hoo 1938-91: the story of the excavations", 1.15pm.

Changing of the Guard

The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

**Birthdays**

Miss Sarah Brightman, soprano, 36; Mr Ronald Campbell MP, 54; Mr David Crosby, singer, 56; Mrs Jennifer d'Abo, chairman, Moyes Stevens Investments, 52; Mr Fred Dowie, snooker player, 84; Vice Admiral John Dunt, Chief of Defence Staff (Systems), 53; Mr Buddy Greco, jazz pianist and singer, 71; Mr David Hopkinson, former cricketer, 71; The Rev Dom Anthony Philip Jebb, for-

mer Headmaster, Downside School, 65; Professor Sir Andrew Kay, surgeon, 61; Sir Stuart McMillan, High Court judge, 59; Sir Robin McDougall, former ambassador to China, 63; Mr Steve Martin, actor and comedian, 52; Lord Mishcon, solicitor, 82; Dr Oliver Nevill, consultant to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, 68; Mr Frederick Raphael, architect, 66; Miss Mary Scammell, 52; Sir Ronald Stewart, former chairman, London Brick Co, 94; The Right Revd Hewitt Thompson, Bishop of Exeter, 68;

Lord Whaddon, former MP chairman, Cambridge Chemical Co, 70; Mr Sydney Wooderson, athlete, 83; Alfred Charles William Hemswoorth, first Viscount Northcliffe, newspaper proprietor, 1922; William Randolph Hearst, newspaper proprietor, 1891; Bertrand Breathwaite, writer, 1956; Clifford Odets, playwright, 1963; Leonard Sidney Woolf, publisher, 1968; Oscar Levant, composer and pianist, 1972; John Boynton Priestley, novelist and playwright, 1984. On this day the French released William of Orange at the bat-

tie of Mons, 1678; Tristan da Cunha was annexed to Great Britain, 1816; Cologne Cathedral, started in 1248, was completed, 1880; the steamer *Blunder*, carrying \$3m in gold, struck an iceberg off Alaska and sank, with the loss of 70 lives, 1901; the BBC was founded, 1922; *Student of Prague*, with Anton Walbrook, 1938; Japan surrendered to the Allies unconditionally, 1945; after peace talks in Cyprus broke down, Turkish troops launched an attack on Nicosia, 1974. Today is

the Feast Day of St Athanasius of Aegina, St Eusebius of Rome, St Pachomius, St Marcellinus of Apamea, St Maximilian Kolbe.

# Hume has a bigger job than being president

**J**ust to see Ken Maginnis and Martin McGuinness engaged in debate on the BBC the other night was a revelation. In conventional terms, their televised meeting advanced no positions, saw no meeting of minds. But the very animation of their encounter once they had shown they could talk to one another was compelling evidence that meetings and conversation have to be the way forward in Northern Ireland.

The immediate prospects for the resumption of peace talks including both Sinn Fein and enough Unionists to make major representation credible remain dim, but there are good auguries. There is, for example, the moderation and flexibility displayed by the August marchers, and Mr Maginnis's growing belief that there is a Unionist case to be made before uncommitted audiences.

During the past few days, however, the sky has darkened over another quarter of Ulster, although this may seem a strange way to greet the possibility that the leader of the SDLP, the moderate nationalist John Hume, is considering allowing his name to go forward for the presidency of the Irish Republic.

Mr Hume is clearly interested. It is indeed a position for which he might be said to be uniquely qualified. Here is a veteran of the peaceful struggle for the unification of the island of Ireland into a single state. His party has pro-

vided legitimacy to umpteen attempts to start and continue dialogue between Protestant and Catholic nationalists and legitimists, between the British and Irish governments. Mr Hume has operated as go-between, interlocutor, confidential agent, able to converse with Sinn Fein without losing the respect of some, at least, of the Unionists. Would not electing him president of the Irish Republic be a sign and symbol of the essentially peaceful intent of most Irish nationalists, north and south of the United Kingdom's border with Ireland? Would not the election of a member of the United Kingdom's House of Commons (who is also a member of the European Parliament) indicate just how close-bound are the politics of Britain and Ireland? Would not his election accelerate the peace process by placing at the heart of the Irish state a man of the North who is committed, heart and soul, to peaceful rearrangement of Ireland's political geography?

Unfortunately, the answers are no, no and no. Mr Hume's candidacy would doubtless play well in the United States of America, where they like their Irish symbolism as brash as the banners in a St Patrick's Day parade. Mr Hume is evidently popular in the Republic, and his candidacy would solve a lot of problems there. His standing would get the leaders of Fianna Fail and to a lesser extent the other parties off the book — they would not have to

campaign or (hard on the heels of a general election) pay for a campaign.

Mr Hume would be a neat-seeming replacement for the popular Mary Robinson. In a very different way, he has star qualities, as she does.

But the evident desire of Bertie Ahern and his colleagues in the Irish cabinet to see the post of president filled by someone with a little more glamour than their party colleague Albert Reynolds does not make a convincing case for Mr Hume. The Irish presidency is a part-time job. Mrs Robinson may have cut an attractive figure but a cold-eyed appraisal of her

achievement would find it hard to identify much in mainstream political life. She has cheered people up and helped to make the Irish feel good about themselves at a time when the Republic has become an Atlantic tiger economy. She has very definitely kept out of the affairs of Northern Ireland (beyond an innocuous walkabout in Belfast) and out of social affairs of the Republic too, beyond offering Irish womanhood a more compelling role model than either Diana or Sinead O'Connor. And this is in the nature of the job. It is not a movers-and-shakers job: it is a figurehead job.

More than that, though, a John Hume candidacy would be bad for the Republic and bad for the prospect of peace in Northern Ireland. Ireland, if so happens, is going to need quite a lot of symbolic politics during the next few years as it negotiates the shoals of the Euro (Ireland joins, Britain doesn't), the expansion of the European Union eastwards and reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. There is talent aplenty in the Irish business community — isn't there an acceptable candidate to be found there? Mr Hume deserves a great deal at the hands of his fellow country people, north and south, but his job and that of the SDLP is not over. He is too valuable to the peace process to go now. Not only would Sinn Fein benefit from further erosion of the SDLP's constituency strength — an inevitable result of John Hume's departure — but an essential counterweight would go.

This is a tender moment in the great sequence of Belfast talks and talks about talks. To have a senior Ulster political player who says he wants to unify Ireland by assent (and so necessarily gradually) suddenly becoming the Irish head of state, successor to Eamon de Valera, implicitly asserting the old Irish state claim to jurisdiction over Ulster, is provocative. Would the Irish Republic open its presidency to any other member of a foreign parliament or invite an Irish person cleaving to the

union with Britain? No. John Hume's candidacy would be regarded by even moderate Unionist opinion as a subterfuge, to obtain by symbols what should only come about, if at all, by the free assent of majorities. For the sake of his neighbours in Ulster and his country — however he defines its borders — Mr Hume should immediately declare himself *hors de combat* in order to focus, yet again, on the road to consensual peace.

## Save a Guard — aim for that bear

What's the point of the Commonwealth wealth if truck drivers in Ontario are not prepared to drive a bit more recklessly? Canadian lorries have not been killing enough black bears to satisfy our Ministry of Defence. The MoD needs some 50 bearskins a year to clothe the heads of the Foot Guards. (Artificial alternatives become bedraggled "like a bad hair day".) But in this age of animal rights, only bears already dead of natural causes will do. Here is one of those modern moments — political leaders who won't let fighting men wear dead animal skins — which would have every earlier generation of soldier, from Caesar to Slim, gaping slack-jawed with incomprehension.



ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL  
TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000 / 0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 3405 / 0171-345 2435

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Confusion over student fees policy

Sir: Your headline on the Government's higher education fees proposal, "Last minute bid to avoid fiasco over fees exemption" (13 August) is exactly right — a fiasco is precisely what the Government has created.

I have every sympathy for my constituent Lily Williams, quoted in your article as "disillusioned" over the Government's conduct. She and many others have written to me in complete confusion over the Government's intentions. There was nothing in Labour's manifesto to indicate the direction they were intending to take, nor does there appear to have been much strategic thinking behind the hurried announcement of a waiver of fees for voluntary work, and their even more hurried announcement that all students with deferred entry may be exempt.

It is astonishing that the Department for Education and Employment was prepared to leak these waiver rumours at the weekend yet refused in the following days to publish full details to reassure worried students. This government, having pledged priority for "education, education, education", now appears to be bent on spin, fudge and betrayal.

Dr EVAN HARRIS MP

(Oxford West and Abingdon,

Lib Dem)

House of Commons

London SW1

Sir: David Walker ("Why university is a journey too far", 11 August), is led astray by stereotypes.

His argument is that most students are middle class (true). It costs public money to allow students to live away from home (true). This represents a subsidy to the middle class (true — up to a point). Therefore students should live at home.

The conclusion is false. If the "subsidy" were to be withdrawn, this would mean that students would live at home — unless, of course, they could afford to live at university and thereby gain the benefits that Mr Walker sneers at. ("Getting a worthwhile degree requires more than nine-to-five commitment.")

For the wealthy, with a home computer, books, car, ample private living and working space etc, losing this subsidy would be a drag but not a disaster. For the working-class student the loss would make higher education all but impossible. They could certainly never hope to compete on level terms.

The social class distribution of university education is skewed enough as it is. Forcing students to study from home would make the situation worse.

P K BURGESS  
President  
Association of University Teachers  
London W11

Sir: Over 20 years ago I left North London to study for a degree in Middlesbrough. Aside from giving me an insight into a North-East culture still little appreciated in the South, it also forced me to take responsibility for my own actions, in a way that probably would not have occurred had I stayed in London near or with my parents. The result of my trip north was that I got a good honours degree, decided that I was definitely a socialist and I still get on with my parents. I think it is time to be called a liberal education.

KEITH FLETT

London N17



### Inflation not beaten yet

Sir: Underlying inflation (excluding mortgage interest payments) hit 3 per cent in the year to July 1997; the Treasury states that inflation will fall back to the Treasury's target rate of 2.5 per cent ("Headline inflation at two year high", 13 August).

We believe that inflation is now far more serious than most commentators suggest, since the current rate is heavily flattered by a one-off factor — the recent rise in sterling. Our UK economic model recently calculated the impact on current UK inflation, of the near 25 per cent rise in sterling since last summer. Based on the proportion of total UK input costs represented by imports, we estimate that the 3 per cent inflation rate for the 12 months to July 1997 would have been at least 2.5 per cent higher if sterling had remained static over the last 12 months. In other words, the fundamental (sterling adjusted) inflation rate is around 5.5 per cent.

The inflationary pressures come home to roost in 1998. It is likely that, between now and next summer, there will be no significant net rise in sterling. For the Treasury to hit its inflation target of around 2.5 per cent in the 12 months to July 1998, the Bank of England will have to take further action to rein in consumer spending. This must involve still higher interest rates.

M C FITZPATRICK

Head of Economics

Chancery Vellacott

London WC1

Sir: In defence of the Christian faith I cannot let Lynne Wallis's article "Praise the Lord? Not me" (8 August) pass without comment. If it had been directed at other believing groups, such as Muslims, or social groups, such as gays, the riots might have already occurred.

I come into the category of possessing "a great yawning gap to fill, or a problem I imagine God will help me overcome". I suppose she is right, as He has given eternal life, the lack of which had hitherto been a problem.

JOHN SLOAN

Leeds

Sir: The Rev Neil Gardner (letter, 12 August) asks why Lynne Wallis thinks first advocated Sunday as a day of rest, and answers: "God, I believe." No, He didn't. It was the Emperor Constantine.

The Sabbath is the biblical seventh day of rest. Sunday was the eighth day, when He "created" Adam — a working day.

Sunday, called the Lord's Day in Christianity, is the weekly memorial of the resurrection of the Christ from the dead on the first day of the week. Constantine introduced the first civil legislation concerning Sunday in 321 when he decreed that all work should cease on Sunday, except that farmers could work if necessary.

REG HEMS

Cockfosters, Hertfordshire

### Ungrammatical

Sir: Grammar tests are to be put on ice because "many English teachers [are] not confident about teaching sentence structure" (report, 12 August). In other words, they don't know how to construe the language they purport to teach. How did they qualify as English teachers?

Mrs A FULLER

Tamworth, Staffordshire

### Heavy price of angering the US

Sir: Simon Faulkner (letter, 9 August) is right to dub the sanctions regime against Iraq "barbaric". The United States is currently blocking dozens of food and medicine shipments to Iraq, allowable even under UN Resolution 986. I have in my possession a copy of a letter signed by David H Harmon, acting supervisor of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (US Treasury), in which he threatens aid workers illegally collecting and transporting medical relief supplies to the people of Iraq with "up to 12 years in prison and \$1m in fines".

The blocking of civilian access to food and medicine, as a means of punishing "pariah" states, is now part of American policy, pursued through the United Nations where possible and unilaterally, through extraterritorial legislation, where not.

Apart from Iraq, Cuba is the most obvious victim. Through domestic law (primarily the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act and the 1996 Helms-Burton Act) the US is fostering malnutrition in the Cuban population. The American Association for World Health, the US committee for the World Health Organisation, reported in March 1997 that US policy on Cuba was contributing to "serious nutritional deficits, particularly among pregnant women ... food shortages were linked to a devastating outbreak of

neuropathy numbering in the tens of thousands".

The US blockade on Cuban access to water-treatment chemicals and spare parts for water-supply systems has led to a "rising incidence of morbidity and mortality". Denied nausea-preventing drugs, 35 surveyed children in a cancer ward "were vomiting on average 28 to 30 times a day". The last UN General Assembly vote (October 1996) on US policy towards Cuba was 137 against and three for.

Washington worked hard to impose Iraq-style sanctions on Libya, via an extension of Security Council Resolution 748 (1992), but was frustrated by the European need for Libyan oil. The US urged total UN sanctions on North Korea in 1991. Here Iraq-style sanctions were blocked by the threat of a Chinese veto in the Security Council.

American foreign policy represents a multifaceted violation of the UN Genocide Convention (Articles II and III) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

GEOFF SIMONS

Stockport, Greater Manchester

Sir: I was absolutely stunned to read (report, 9 August) that the French are considered by tourists to be "chronically rude, aggressive, dirty, idle and disorganized". I have just returned from a holiday in Languedoc and found the complete opposite.

Was the young salesman in Monoprix at Béziers "idle" when he took the trouble to take a shirt out of a sealed packet for my husband to try on? Was the waitress in our hotel "dirty" when she dusted the tables and examined every glass before we ate outside?

Was the charming elderly gentleman in Montpellier "rude and aggressive" when he showed me where the town centre was and wished me a happy day in Harrow?

I say "Vive la France" — I can't wait to visit again.

JOSE SEGAL

Harrow, Middlesex

### BBC evolution

Sir: Let me set readers' minds at rest following Rob Brown's piece about the future of *Newsnight* (11 August). There is no plan to make the programme "kinder" or "softer" as he alleges. This is not to say that *Newsnight* will not evolve.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

JOSE SEGAL

Harrow, Middlesex

JOSE SEGAL

Harrow, Middlesex

# The master of spin goes in to bat

Peter Mandelson defends himself, in conversation with Donald Macintyre, against accusations that he is the 'self-appointed acting PM', and explains why he wants to be elected to Labour's NEC

**I**t's Tuesday night, and a world quite outside the media and political beltway Peter Mandelson is normally assumed to inhabit. Labour's most controversial figure is charming a large group of leading Asian journalists and editors in Westminster's best known Indian restaurant.

The event was arranged only last Thursday, but everyone who is anyone in the thriving South Asian sector of London's fourth estate is out in force. The atmosphere is convivial, the curry the Kundan's most delicious, the MP Keith Vaz's welcoming speech a gracious tribute to how much "we in the Labour Party all owe to the Minister without Portfolio". In his own speech Mandelson lays heavy emphasis on the need to improve race relations, and he appeals to the editors to help make the Millennium Experience a true celebration for every aspect of a "multi-faith, multi-community" British society.

"I was appointed on 1 May as minister responsible for co-ordinating the presentation of government policy, in effect being the government spokesman. Instead of being behind the scenes off the record, an 'in the dark' brief, I'm a spokesman. What is surprising or unusual about that? It becomes particularly exposed in August when so many other ministers are away. Normally, departmental issues would be fronted by departmental ministers."

What's more, he says, the big media events of this month have been issues that have certainly affected the Government, but, by their very nature, aren't matters of departmental policy: the tragic suicide of the MP Gordon McMaster, the failure to win Uxbridge, the break-up of Robin Cook's marriage, Lord Simon's shares. "I was asked to carry on co-ordinating the Government's message during August. I've been doing it since May. But no one's commented about it or cared about it. It's just been there. But in August things which go completely unremarked for the rest of the year suddenly become stories. That is the definition of an August story."

So let's turn to the top item on the charge sheet, that he wound up the story on a Foreign

appointed acting Prime Minister and goodness knows what else. Mandelson has become the story.

About the reasons for this, he is emphatically clear: "The Tories say it. The BBC run with it and the newspapers run with it and report it as fact. Whatever it is, Mandelson's taking over; Mandelson's a megalomaniac. Mandelson's doing this; Mandelson's doing that. It's all a way of diverting attention from what the Tories really fear, which is the Government's record, its effectiveness and its enduring popularity. They'd rather discuss anything other than that. If they can set me up as a whipping-boy, they have no reason in doing so."

He isn't even in the Cabinet, and yet has he not thrust himself into the limelight as the government's chief ministerial spokesman?

"I was appointed on 1 May as minister responsible for co-ordinating the presentation of government policy, in effect being the government spokesman. Instead of being behind the scenes off the record, an 'in the dark' brief, I'm a spokesman. What is surprising or unusual about that? It becomes particularly exposed in August when so many other ministers are away. Normally, departmental issues would be fronted by departmental ministers."

What's more, he says, the big media events of this month have been issues that have certainly affected the Government, but, by their very nature, aren't matters of departmental policy: the tragic suicide of the MP Gordon McMaster, the failure to win Uxbridge, the break-up of Robin Cook's marriage, Lord Simon's shares. "I was asked to carry on co-ordinating the Government's message during August. I've been doing it since May. But no one's commented about it or cared about it. It's just been there. But in August things which go completely unremarked for the rest of the year suddenly become stories. That is the definition of an August story."

So let's turn to the top item on the charge sheet, that he wound up the story on a Foreign



Office investigation into the leaking of information to Chris Patten's biographer Jonathan Dimbleby for the crude purpose of distracting attention from Robin Cook's marital break-up.

Not so, he says emphatically. That frantic Saturday, when it became clear that the *News of the World* was going to do the worst, after taking two surgeries in Hartlepool, Mandelson sped to Downing Street to co-ordinate every detail of the response with the Foreign Secretary, who him self was travelling down from Edinburgh. He didn't even know about the *Sunday Times* until the Saturday night, and though he absorbed its contents it was "pretty low down the pecking order" compared with the problems generated by the *News of the World*. It wasn't until the following day that, faced with demands for confirmation, Mandelson had himself briefed, and established that it was true.

John Sopel, the BBC duty political correspondent, had indeed been told by a Downing Street official that Mandelson would respond to a question on the Patten affair at the end of his *World This Weekend* interview on the Cook affair, which had been easily the most sensible way of dealing with it. But hadn't Sopel himself implied clearly the following day that he had been encouraged to pursue the story as a welcome distraction from the Cook story?

That wasn't the case, says Mandelson. He had been among those seeking confirmation of the story. What's more, that claim was a "piece of vanity broadcasting by John Sopel. My objection was that the Tories started personal attacks on me, as they always do. The BBC drove the agenda and the papers reported all of it as fact. There are as many macho BBC editors manipulating the news as there are party spin doctors. And as for some of the political correspondents, they are vying over each other in their ambition to take Robin Oakley's job. [Oakley is the BBC's political editor.] Hopefully Robin will be around for a long time."

Is it really in the Government's interests to attack BBC journalists in this way, or to have had his famous subsequent spat with the *World at One* presenter Martha Kearney? He hadn't attacked Martha Kearney - "read the transcript". But there had been an agreement that he would be questioned on the Government's record over its first 100 days. "Why should we

accept the BBC agenda, which is essentially about itself and its own preoccupation with itself and my role at the expense of the listeners' interest in the Government's record, their schools, their health service, the fight against crime, what we're doing about unemployment. You don't usually make converts when you take on a BBC interviewer, but my position suggests the public likes politicians who stand up for themselves. Conservatives are outraged by my audacity. Labour people give three cheers that I stuck to my agenda."

Mandelson is palpably frustrated that the press ignores most of his activity as a below-the-line politician. Mandelson says that while his August job is to "make sure Tony Blair enjoys his holiday in peace, and to be a lightning conductor", luminaries of the seniority of Sir Robin Butler are already going round Whitehall saying what a good strategic job he is doing at the Cabinet Office. He himself says: "People just don't realise that about 20 per cent of my day is spent on press matters, and 80 per cent on the co-ordination of government business and strategic policy work." In normal times, "when I leave the 9am meeting each day [on government presentation, chaired by Mandelson], managing the press is in the hands of Alastair Campbell [Downing Street press secretary and, like the PM, on holiday] and his team. I often don't visit the subject again until the next day. I am involved in the detail of committee work and what the Cabinet Office does in knitting together what the Government is doing."

Some of this activity will surely be dramatically today, when Mandelson devotes much of his Fabian Lecture to the topic of social exclusion, and the Prime Minister's orders for a new Cabinet unit, reporting directly to him, to redeem Labour's pre-election pledge to make Britain a less divided society. Mandelson's use of today's lecture to show that Labour is indeed sensitive to exclusion of the poor - or, as politicians prefer not to call it, the underclass - is an important marker for the Government. But it matters to him personally, too, as a candidate for election to the National Executive of the Labour Party.

Why is he standing, when surely he already

has all the power he can handle? First, because he thinks the NEC should be a proper executive body which takes a real grip of the party's administration and money, more than it does. "I think having attended the NEC's meetings for 10 years as a senior party official, I do know something about how the party could be made more professional." But, secondly, because he believes: "The misgivings that some people have of me is of having seemingly unaccountable power, that I'm put in a position of influence, of leader's patronage, and have a clout and wield power which is wholly dependent on the leader and is not accountable to anything or anyone else in the party. I sympathise with that view. I'm not standing for the NEC because I want to distance myself from Tony Blair, or necessarily because I want to establish greater independence from Tony Blair - but because I want to be recognised by the party for what I am and what I do, in my own right. And for the party to feel that having put me in position and elected me to it, that I'm accountable to them as a result."

While Blair hasn't declared his hand, Mandelson remains firmly in favour of electoral reform - though to the alternative vote system which Liberal Democrats view as an unworthy substitute for true PR. On Tam Dalyell's steadfast opposition to Labour's devolution plans - including a remark that Mandelson's claim that it will underpin the union is "silly" - he says sensibly, "You'll never silence Tam. And in a party which is as strong as confident as ours, you shouldn't try to do so." But he insists that once the referendums are over, and assuming they produce a "yes" vote, "then I would expect Labour MPs to respect that mandate and act and vote accordingly in the House of Commons."

Will it not then be a grim setback for his political career if he fails to be elected to the NEC? No, he says, a "disappointment". Not many Labour politicians, particularly those below Cabinet rank, make it to the NEC on the first attempt. And, no, despite all the suggestions that he should be given a Cabinet job with all dispatch, he will not speculate on the subject. There are no early reshuffles in sight, and he is very happy doing his current job, thanks very much.

If nothing else, today's Fabian lecture should present a more rounded Mandelson than the pantomime villain image of the last fortnight.

Mandelson: I'm not standing for the NEC because I want to distance myself from Tony Blair... but because I want to be recognised by the party for what I am and what I do, in my own right'

Photograph: Tony Buckingham

## life insurance: what's in it for you?

The warm feeling that your family is financially well protected if you die, but little else. Your life premiums look after their future, not yours.

The Cash-Back Term Assurance policy from Zurich Municipal is very different. It guarantees to return 50% of the premiums you've paid when the policy finally expires - providing you haven't.

### 50% cashback

And while this is a very welcome saving, it doesn't stop there. As a public sector employee, you will be entitled to a further privileged discount of 15% on the cost of your premiums during the whole term of the policy.

**15% off**

The Cash-Back Term Assurance policy from Zurich Municipal - full life cover if you die - 50% of your premiums back if you don't.

To get more out of your life insurance, call:

**0800 147 147**

Open: 9am-8pm Monday to Friday, 9am-1pm Saturday.  
For your security, all telephone calls on the above number will be recorded and randomly monitored. Cover and premiums are subject to individual assessment.

Please give the reference: LIN1408

Zurich Municipal is a trading name of Zurich Life Assurance Limited, which is registered by the Personal Investments Authority. Zurich Life Assurance and Investment Business Zurich Municipal number 16000, which is of Zurich Life only and does not provide financial advice. Zurich Life Assurance Company Ltd is registered in England. No 070139. Registered Office: Zurich House, 369-371 Newgate Street, London EC1A 7AL. Registered Office: Zurich House, 369-371 Newgate Street, London EC1A 7AL.

**ZURICH  
MUNICIPAL**

focusing on the public sector

## Rita, high priestess (special rates for Royals)

**O**n Monday, as sweltering afternoon turned to warm evening in the small Derbyshire village of Lower Pilsey, local woman Tina Cave noticed a thrumming sound in the sky overhead. Looking up, she spotted a helicopter circling above the trees. For 10 minutes, she said later, it flew low over the village, as though trying to locate the right house. Finally the helicopter landed in a field, normally a paddock grazed by several horses.

The arrival of the green and cream chopper occasioned great interest among local children. Especially when word got around that its occupants were none other than Dodi Fayed and Dodi Wales. Young Emma Radford, 11, told the *Daily Mirror* that, "When we spotted the helicopter we ran off as quickly as we could to get a camera." Described as a "Mirror reader", Emma showed her fitness for the description by taking a photograph of incredible fuzziness - although she stopped short of doctoring it. Mind you she is only 11, and there is still time.

The loving couple had

dropped out of the sky to spend 90 minutes in the company of Rita Rogers, an unremarkable-looking woman in her mid-twenties. Ms Rogers is a discreet psychic whose card reads: "Rita Rogers, Medium. Private sittings and phone readings". We must suppose that she can put you in touch with the dear departed either in the flesh, so to speak, or via a BT connection. Conceivably, she manages some ectoplasmic video-conferencing. Ms Rogers' charges are reasonable: ordinary folk pay £35 per hour, and the Princess of Wales has seances for free.

Rita, who is writing a book entitled *From One World To Another*, emphatically denies that she is other than the real thing. "I am not a fake," she protests. "My job is like being a priestess." Those who study world religions and their history might wonder what is meant by this last claim. Priestesses could be considered a mized bunch, from the live baby-burners of Baal, to the temple whores of Tanit. We must wait for the book to discover which Ms Rogers is in mind, for she is not speaking at the moment.

The Princess was put on to Rita by none other than the Duchess of York, who - we are told - "turned to the psychic for advice after separating from Prince Andrew". Fergie was consoled by the prediction that she was not destined to remain alone, but that she would marry a US president. How the dead know these things is beyond me, but I suppose it is one of the few perks that the poor wretches enjoy. Certainly Fergie and Bill would make an interesting couple, what

with all that wonking. Since this introduction, Diana has, apparently, used Rita Rogers to try and contact her deceased father. But why did she visit Lower Pilsey yesterday, taking poor old Dodi with her? Was it, as one newspaper speculated, because she is "keen to know what the future holds for their romance"? I would lay odds that - if this were the case - old Rita didn't tell the pair that they were poison together. Or perhaps Diana generously wished to help her lover get in touch with his own grandmother, a woman who died in her early fifties, according to the *Daily Mail*, following "a face lift which went tragically wrong". Presumably the face was lifted much too far, leaving the restless ghost to wander howling round Harley Street surgeries, with the modern-day equivalent of holding her head under her arm.

Should we worry? Royalty historically has a penchant for such figures. The Tsarina Alexandra had Rasputin, and if Prince Yousouff had not poisoned, shot, stabbed and drowned old Rassars, maybe Grigori junior would have been available for our Miles Kington is on holiday



**David Aarons**

modern female royals. Harrods helicopters would have swooped down on his hovel-cum-bordello just outside Orel, so that much chastising, mortification and other necessary treatments could have been applied.

Instead, today's princesses and duchesses have had to make do with Madame Yasio and the blue pyramid, with Simone Simmons, who saw "vast black whirlwind of energy" on the side of Diana's bed where a partner might sleep (a description that does not quite fit the essentially docile Dodi), with astrologers galore, therapists of all hues and - of course - fortnightly colonic irrigation. It's a bum deal.

But then, we all get what we deserve, don't we? True of Di, true of us. If we sit open-gobbed in front of the *Paranormal World of Paul McKenna*, think crop circles are not made by idiots with tractors, mistake night choppers for UFOs and bother to learn precisely nothing about the world around us, then how can we complain about princesses who like to talk to the dead?

Hawkins

**I**t's the end of winter here in Sydney. The snow-ploughs have been churning up the Pacific Highway for days, the sand-gritters are out in force, rudimentary snowmen line the suburban gardens of Paddington, the cab drivers all wear mittens, tyre-chains are mandatory for anyone venturing off the motorway, and ... No, I'm afraid I can't keep this up. It is winter in Australia, but - much as you might wish them the kind of freeze-your-nuts-off winter that Britons fly to Oz in December to escape from - there's little sign of it. The sky is a kingfisher blue, long, ironed-out clouds line the horizon of Sydney Harbour purely (it seems) to produce more interesting sunsets, and everything sparkles like mad in the morning - the result, according to Thackeray, of keeping a section of ocean cooped up in a bay.

Bondi Beach is lined with industrial skips full of litter, though many of the cardboard boxes seem to be empty wine crates. A stiff breeze whips across the wide sand, to where two blonde babes in shimmering PVC are being filmed with a brace of dolish lifeguards for some vapid sitcom. At Surf's Up, one of umpteen T-shirt shops on Campbell Parade, the owner, Jim Nicholson, stands in front of a two-bar electric fire ("Christ, it's bloody freezin' in heah") and inveighs against the changing local population. "Bondi used to be full of heroin and losers. People didn't like to admit they lived here. Then Fox studios opened down the road, and the place was crawling with film producers and movie stars. Now it's full of glamorous hangers-on, and your roach-infested two-bedroom apartment's worth half a mill." He scratched his head at the oddness of social evolution. "Believe me, mate - it used to be heroin, now it's cocaine, only the addicts are prettier."

Everyone in town talks about food, and a week-long acquaintance with Oz cuisine leaves you flabbergasted. They devour eccentric, shy things, such as blue-eyed cod and "mud crab" and sardines - the last a bizarrely popular choice. Otherwise, the menu is ablaze with invention and eccentricity ("steamed kumquat pudding")?

The only odd thing is the ubiquity of the letters BYO at every restaurant entrance, suggesting Bring Your Own wine, though nobody can explain why.

The locals are friendly, if insulting. In the first three days, I've been called a *worm warr*, a *dag* (it means, since you ask, something that dangles from a sheep's bottom), a *rat-bag* and a suspect *woofier*, and that was just by the womenfolk. Attempts at gallantry are best avoided. I told one of beauty that she should visit Italy some time, where her every venture out of doors would be greeted by cries of "*Che stupenda figura!*". "If I knew what that meant," she said crossly, "I'd slap yer face ..."

I spent the weekend up the east coast at Byron Bay, the most spectacular sandy beach I have ever scampered down, into freezing shallows and deafening waves. Everyone tries, with foolhardy intrepidity, to surf on these Homeric funnels, these terrifying Hokusai curls, these tidal monstrosities, these gigantic crashing spirals pointing to a watery grave. The Beach Boys wouldn't stand an earthly. Only the bravest, the toughest Oz musclemen could possibly survive them. To beguile an idle afternoon, I watched the surf heroes arrive on the beach: the fat roddie with long black ringlets and fussy posing pouch; the three laughing blond luminaries, complete with abbreviated surfboards (had they shrunk in the cold water, along with everything else?); the



john  
walsh

*'Believe me mate, Bondi Beach used to be full of heroin ... now it's cocaine, only the addicts are prettier'*

# business & city

FINANCIAL JOURNAL  
OF THE YEAR

Business news desk: tel 0171-298 2636 fax 0171-298 2098  
DEPUTY BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: MICHAEL HARRISON

## Jobless total falls to 17-year low as rates take breather

**Tom Stevenson**  
Financial Editor

Interest rates have paused but not yet peaked, economists predicted yesterday as the Bank of England admitted there was still a risk that it would overshoot its inflation target two years from now. That fear increased yesterday after a sharp fall in the jobless rate to its lowest level for 17 years.

The City's caution, which led to a 72.2-point drop in share prices, came despite labour market data suggesting the economy had entered a golden period where inflation and earnings growth remained stable despite strong economic growth and a falling unemployment rate.

In its Quarterly Inflation Report, its first since being set free to determine monetary policy, the Bank of England said the cost of living would fall over the next year but admitted it would be on a rising trend at the end of its two-year forecasting horizon.

Mervyn King, the Bank's economics director and a deputy-governor designate, said there was a greater probability that inflation would be higher than its 2.5 per cent target than lower on the basis of current rates.

But the Inflation Report restated the Bank's belief that monetary policy had reached a position where it could stand back for a while to "assess the direction in which the inflation risks are likely to materialise".

The inflationary risks from the consumer boom were underlined by official figures earlier this week showing a rise in the headline rate of inflation to 3.3 per cent, although the rise was driven by higher mortgage rates and excise duty increases in the Budget. Excluding those factors, the underlying rise in the cost of living was static.

The argument that the British economy was enjoying a virtuous cycle of strong growth coupled with low inflation was boosted by labour market figures yesterday showing an unexpectedly large fall in the

jobless rate but flat earnings growth. Just under 50,000 returned to the workforce in July, taking the unemployment rate to 1.5 million, its lowest level for almost 17 years.

The fall in the unemployment rate took the percentage of the workforce without a job to 5.5 per cent, down from 5.7 per cent in June. That was the lowest percentage since April 1990.

David Coleman, an economist at CIBC Wood Gundy,

said: "Although there may be some uncertainty about the seasonal adjustment, a monthly fall in unemployment of almost 50,000 is impressive by any standards. There is still reason to be cautious, however. Some slowing in the pace of fall in unemployment will be needed if the risk of bottlenecks and skill shortages is to be avoided."

Despite that concern, wage pressures showed no signs of increasing last month, with average earnings growth holding steady at 4.25 per cent. Economists said the figures added weight to the idea – increasingly

fashionable in the US – that structural changes in the labour market over the past decade had significantly reduced the rate of unemployment consistent with a take-off in wage growth.

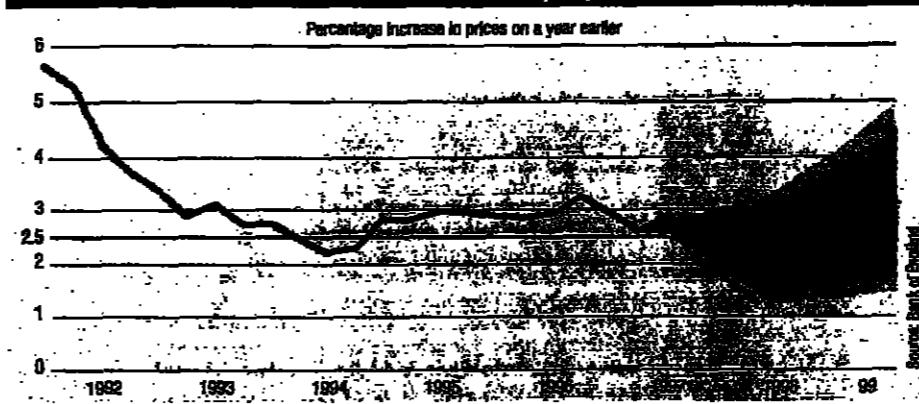
Jonathan Loyne, UK economist at HSBC Markets, said: "These figures provide a further hint that the UK is enjoying a US-style combination of strong activity, low unemployment, and subdued wage growth."

He warned, however, that the Bank's monetary policy committee would remain concerned that unemployment could not continue to fall at the current rate without wage pressures eventually emerging.

Another analysis said: "The key point the Bank made when it raised interest rates after the last meeting was that a peak had been reached. The market knows now that interest rates have not reached a peak."

Mr King said it was difficult to know how long the pause in interest rate movements would be. "I cannot anticipate how long the pause will be."

Current RPIX inflation projection



## Warburg helps SBC profits rise 84%

SBC Warburg, the London-based investment banking arm of Switzerland's third-largest bank, helped power its parent, SBC, to an 84 per cent increase in profits for the first half of 1997. The booming investment banking arm became the biggest profit earner of SBC's four main businesses, with profits up 60 per cent to SF691m (£288m).

SBC made SF1.32bn in the first half and said it expected a full-year profit to comfortably exceed SF1.7bn, though it saw earnings growth slowing in the second half. While the Basel-based bank is the smallest of the Swiss big three, it is now seen by many analysts as the best.

"This is an excellent result and compares well with the other Swiss banks," said Carlo Capaul, a fund manager at Van Vende Portfolio Management.

"If the financial markets rise further, companies like SBC will continue to profit."

The results were interpreted yesterday as good news for London as a global financial centre, as well as confirmation that SBC did a good deal when it bought the ailing SG Warburg two years ago for £890m.

At that time a comment by Warburg's chairman, Sir David Scholey, that the two companies fitted "like the chunk of a Rolls-Royce door" drew widespread scepticism.

Following a failed merger attempt with Morgan Stanley, the UK's largest investment bank was in crisis. Now Warburg's powerful securities side has benefited hugely from the huge new distribution channels it has access to via SBC's global banking operations.

"SBC Warburg keeps growing, enabling Swiss Bank to fulfil its ambition to be a global investment bank," said James Alexander, an analyst at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

Sceptics pointed yesterday to soaring financial markets around the world this year, and questioned whether SBC Warburg's growth was sustainable. The Swiss Market Index rose 46 per cent this year with indexes in Germany up 48 per cent and the UK up 22 per cent. The Dow Jones Industrial Average is up 23.4 per cent.

Commission income for SBC Warburg's securities operations surged with these rising markets and was the main reason for the first-half profit gain.

This year SBC Warburg bought American investment bank Dillon Read for \$600m. Last month it announced a joint venture with Brunswick Investment, one of Russia's largest securities firms, and another joint venture with Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan.

Last week, SBC Warburg was named the most successful mergers adviser on cross-border transactions in Europe for the first half of the year by *Acquisitions Monthly* magazine, beating American rivals such as Morgan Stanley, Dean Witter, Donaldson Lufkin & Jenrette and Goldman Sachs.

## Concerns over sterling kept rate rise down

The Bank of England considered imposing a half-point increase in base rates at the July meeting of its Monetary Policy Committee, but settled for a quarter-point rise to keep a lid on the soaring pound, writes Tom Stevenson. Minutes of the meeting, published yesterday, showed how the MPC struggled to balance the need to restrain consumer spending with a desire to keep the rise of sterling in check.

The harshness of the policy dilemma emerged as the pound fell sharply against the German mark again yesterday, held back by the Bank's apparent conviction that interest rates do not need to rise in the short term and by a rising belief in Germany that base rates there are about to increase.

The pound fell by more than 4 pence yesterday to under DM2.50, shrugging off strong labour market data that showed an unexpectedly large fall in the unemployment rate which might normally be expected to put upward pressure on interest rates. The jobless number was mitigated by average earnings numbers showing subdued wage pressures.

Minutes of the MPC's July meeting showed that the committee had considered whether a larger interest rate rise might create uncertainty about the future direction of rates which might put less upward pressure on the exchange rate. It concluded, however, that a half-point rise might actually lead to economists factoring in a higher peak to the interest rate

cycle and an unnecessary appreciation of sterling.

The relative attraction of the mark was heightened yesterday by a hawkish assessment of German inflation by the Bundesbank. In its monthly report, the German central bank said inflation had picked up and warned it would steer policy to ensure price stability. The movement in exchange rates confirmed the view that the rise of sterling in recent months has had more to do with the weakness of the German currency than its own inherent strength. The mark also appreciated by around 3 pence against the dollar yesterday following US producer price data showing a seventh successive month of declining prices.

## RBS on hunt after £630m Midshires buy

**Nic Cicutti**  
Personal Finance Editor

Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) yesterday signalled that it is prepared to consider more building society takeovers as it confirmed its acquisition of Birmingham Midshires, the fifth-largest remaining society, for up to £630m.

The takeover could result in a cash payout of £600 or free RBS shares to Midshires' 1 million-plus members which include up to 300,000 so-called "carpetbaggers".

Dr George Mathewson, group chief executive at RBS, said the takeover of Wolverhampton-based Midshires would virtually double the RBS residential mortgage book and increase its retail savings balances by 75 per cent.

"If there came along a very substantial deal on the same basis [as this], I do not think that anyone would say no to it. I do not know anyone who would say anything different," he added.

However, Jeremy Batstone, head of research at NatWest Stockbrokers, said: "RBS has traditionally been seen as the prey rather than the predator,

although this appears not to be a hostile takeover. But Midshires is not big enough an acquisition to prevent RBS from still being seen as a potential target."

Birmingham Midshires, which has a residential mortgage book of about £7bn, has about 1.1 million savers and 150,000 borrowers serviced through 115 branches. RBS, which operates through 660 branches, has slightly more savers and less borrowers. It also has 1.7 million current account holders and the bank's total assets stand at almost £70bn.

The takeover had been widely anticipated since the society resolutely refused to rule the option out 18 months ago, at the time of flotation announcements by Woolwich, Northern Rock and Alliance & Leicester building societies.

Mr Batstone said: "It has been an open secret that [Midshires] was looking for a partner and has been everyone's favourite to be 'carpetbagged'. It is yet another nail in the coffin for mutuality despite the recent Nationwide vote. The rest of the building societies are swimming against a tide which is coming in fast."

"I think George Mathewson picked up the phone about a

week before I did, but we had also concluded that RBS was the one we should be talking to," Mr Jackson added.

Although Midshires' mortgage processing centre in Bracknell, Berkshire, will close, Mr Jackson pledged there will be no compulsory redundancies among staff. Midshires would continue to be run as a separate

business, and its brand identity and branch network had been guaranteed for three years.

The takeover would allow for considerable cross-distribution of each organisation's services and financial products, which he said was needed by members of his society.

Mr Jackson denied that continual rumours about Mid-

shires' intentions had led to "carpetbagging" on a mass scale, thereby diluting the value of any free payout to longer-term members. He said the new accounts had increased the value of Midshires to RBS and allowed for even greater cross-selling opportunities.

RBS said it was pricing the deal at a price/earnings ratio of

12 when the society is finally taken over next year. The deal will be financed by issuing new shares, which are to be taken up entirely by Scottish Widows, the Edinburgh mutual life insurer, lifting its stake in RBS to about 4.7 per cent.

RBS already collaborates with Scottish Widows over telephone sales of personal pensions.

Mike Jackson, chief executive of Birmingham Midshires and RBS respectively, admitted yesterday to nine-month long talks

with RBS about the deal.

Mike Jackson, chief executive at Birmingham Midshires, said that the two organisations had come together only nine months ago, after a long-running review of the society's options concluded that a takeover by another institution made most sense.

Although Midshires' mortgage processing centre in Bracknell, Berkshire, will close, Mr Jackson pledged there will be no compulsory redundancies among staff. Midshires would continue to be run as a separate

business, and its brand identity and branch network had been guaranteed for three years.

The chief executive of one of the largest RECs attacked the proposals as "idealised" and said he had warned Professor Littlechild that the industry would "fight the price controls all the way", implying the issue could be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The firm supply price formula is due on 22 September.

He added: "This is a ludicrous situation to be in. The

price cap he's proposing won't foster competition. It will deter competition. We're spending

almost £1bn as an industry preparing for 1998 and we'll have nothing to show for it."

The chief executive claimed an average REC, with annual sales of £500m, would see its profit on supply of £50m turn into losses of up to £50m.

Profits margins in electricity supply have always been low, with most earnings coming from the regional distribution monopolies.

Mr Horney said he was keen to undertake another venture.

"It will probably be something in retail or leisure but I've got no specific plans. I've taken two companies to the market. It would be nice to do three."

St James Beach owns four hotels in Barbados, including the Coconut Creek and Crystal Grove. It recorded profits of £3.9m on sales of £17.3m last year.

Elegant Hotels was formed in 1996 to operate the Tradewinds Hotel in Antigua. It has also acquired a site in Barbados to build another hotel. The company said the combination of the two businesses would provide greater economies of scale and more prominence in the region. St James Beach shares gained 8p to 198p.

Though Mr Horney has made two fortunes in little more than a decade he did suffer a setback last year with a housebuilder called Regent Corporation which ran into difficulties.

The company is now in administration and Mr Horney, who was on the board, is owed £2.5m in loan notes. However, he said they were secured and he was confident he would get the money back.

## RECs warn controls will damage competition

**Chris Godsmark**  
Business Correspondent

Electricity companies have stepped up their attack on new price controls proposed by Professor Stephen Littlechild, the industry regulator, by warning the Government that they could risk damaging moves towards domestic power competition next year.

In a letter sent a fortnight ago to John Battle, the industry minister, the Electricity Association claimed the new price

structure would wipe out supply profits for the regional electricity companies (RECs).

The complaint followed what were described as "frosty" meetings between Professor Littlechild and the RECs. An industry source said the companies had written jointly to Mr Battle because he had effectively put himself in charge of delivering competition, which is due to start in phases from April 1998.

The letter added that the profit margin on supply, which account for around 7 per cent of customer bills, would be so drastically cut that it would make it uneconomic for any new operators to come into the market. A copy of the letter was sent to the industry regulator.

The consultation paper, published last month, suggested average household bills would fall by 12 per cent from April to around £238 excluding VAT.

Part of the reduction is already guaranteed from the existing distribution price controls, which account for some 30 per cent

of bills. But the latest plans also envisage supply costs, such as billing overheads and marketing, falling by 15 per cent a year, with bigger reductions for higher-cost RECs.

Generators have already attacked the suggestion in the document that generation costs will drop by between 4 per cent and 12 per cent in real terms next year as cheaper coal contracts come into force. The new regime would, for the first time, impose maximum prices instead of the current formula

which allows higher generation costs to be passed through into bills.

The chief executive of one of the largest RECs attacked the proposals as "idealised" and said he had warned Professor Littlechild that the industry would "fight the price controls all the way", implying the issue could be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The firm supply price formula is due on 22 September.

He added: "This is a ludicrous situation to be in. The

price cap he's proposing won't

foster competition. It will deter competition. We're spending

almost £1bn as an industry preparing for 1998 and we'll have nothing to show for it."

The chief executive claimed an average REC, with annual sales of £500m, would see its profit on supply of £50m turn into losses of up to £50m.

Profits margins in electricity supply have always been low, with most earnings coming from the regional distribution monopolies.

Mr Horney said he was keen to undertake another venture.

"It will probably be something in retail or leisure but I've got no specific plans. I've taken two companies to the market. It would be nice to do three."

St James Beach owns four hotels in Barbados, including the Coconut Creek and Crystal Grove. It recorded profits of £3.9m on sales of £17.3m last year.

Elegant Hotels was formed in 1996 to operate the Tradewinds Hotel in Antigua. It has also acquired a site in Barbados to build another hotel. The company said the combination of the two businesses would provide greater economies of scale and more prominence in the region. St James Beach shares gained 8p to 198p.

Though Mr Horney has made two fortunes in little more than a decade he did suffer a setback last year with a housebuilder called Regent Corporation which ran into difficulties.

The company is now in administration and Mr Horney, who was on the board, is owed £2.



## COMMENT

'Conventional wisdom says that when labour markets tighten, pay packets go up, fuelling consumption and hence inflation. The latest figures would suggest, however, that Britain may at last have broken the link.'

## Attempting to square the virtuous circle

**S**cenario A: Unemployment at its lowest since 1980. Inflation in check. Average earnings on a plateau. House prices flat. Consumer confidence at a seven-year high. Output growing at a healthy but sustainable 3 per cent. What a list. What an economy. Goodbye boom and bust, welcome to the virtuous circle.

**S**cenario B: An overvalued exchange rate. Windfall gains fuelling a high street spending binge. Company receivables running at 1989 levels. A bull market about to run out of steam. R-Rex mania. Oh dear. Better get the holiday to France in now. Recession around the corner.

Yesterday's unemployment figures, showing a 50,000 drop in the jobless total in July, were better than anyone had a right to expect. What made them even more impressive was their publication alongside figures showing an absence of any inflationary wage pressures with the rise in average earnings stuck firmly on a plateau.

Conventional wisdom says that when labour markets tighten, pay packets go up, fuelling consumption and hence inflation. The latest figures would suggest, however, that Britain may at last have broken the link with the help of its flexible labour markets created by the reforms of the last 15 years. They are certainly happy around at the Bank of England following last week's quarter point rise in interest rates. The Bank's latest Inflation Report pronounces

itself satisfied that the Government's 2.5 per cent inflation target is now in range without the need for further fiscal tightening.

In truth, the picture is less clear and arguably less benign than that. As the Bank itself concedes, the risks to its central projection of inflation lie more on the upside than the downside, suggesting that further rate rises will be necessary.

In the markets it is a mixed bag. The foreign exchanges seem to have bought the line for now that sterling is no longer a one way bet. But the equity markets seem less persuaded that the inflationary tiger has been tamed by the way the Footsie is nudging back down around the 5,000 mark.

Meanwhile the unemployment totals have been massaged so many times that comparisons spread over 17 years start to become meaningless. There have been twice that number of changes in the way the figures are calculated in that time.

It may be too premature to start talking up a recession. But it is equally far too early to conclude that the boom/bust cycle is a relic of the past.

### Midshires whets the carpetbaggers' appetite

**A**nd then there were 71. Birmingham Midshires' capitulation to the Royal Bank of Scotland means that the building

society movement has now shrunk in number by a half in little more than 10 years. It looks like becoming slimmer still since the carnivorous appetites of the RBS will not stop here.

Nationwide's valiant refusal to convert to a bank begins to look like the last twitch from the dying body of mutualism. But perhaps all is not lost.

Birmingham Midshires has been walking about with its skirt around its waist for two years trying to tempt some passing bank. In the process it has sucked in 300,000 carpetbaggers more interested in getting a buy than a building society from their deposits. Yesterday they struck gold and never mind the thousands of ordinary savers who will see the wealth created over several generations frittered away in another windfall.

The blatant manner in which the society was fattened up for conversion contrasts starkly with the explanations trotted out yesterday by its chief executive Mike Jackson as to why mutualism is being forsaken.

All that Birmingham Midshires had done was listen to its members and conclude that they deserved a wider range of services than a building society could offer. Apparently its 1.2 million members find it a chore having to open separate bank accounts and buy life assurance elsewhere.

Never mind, they will get their £700 bung and Mr Jackson will get a plum job with the

parent company if he wants it along with the chairmanship of the society.

What next? Well, there are a whole raft of middling building societies a great deal more wedded to mutualism than Birmingham Midshires who could be next in line, starting with the Britannia, the Norwich and Peterborough, the Bradford and Bingley and the Portman.

The last of these could make a particularly tasty second helping for the RBS since the Portman would neatly fill the geographic bits still missing from the jigsaw once Birmingham Midshires has been turned.

Let's hope they are made of sterner stuff than the Brummies. For Birmingham Midshires' borrowers, the bung will probably only offset the higher mortgage rates they have been charged compared with say the Nationwide. After conversion they will be ripe for worse plunder.

### Time-bomb is ticking for Littlechild

**A**s the clock ticks down to domestic electricity competition next year Professor Stephen Littlechild looks increasingly like he is sitting on a time-bomb. He is already at loggerheads with the companies over how much of the cost of introducing competition they can pass on to customers. The professor says less than £400m, the industry wants

£850m, and neither side is budging an inch.

Not content with that, he has decided to declare war on two further fronts. According to the RECs the new supply price controls would turn a low profit business into a no profit business, just as the regulator is trying to attract new competitors into the market. No surprise then that the Tesco, Sainsbury's, BPs and Shells of this world have turned their noses up at such thin pickings.

It is no surprise to hear privatised utilities squeal when a regulator turns the screw on their earnings. But given that electricity supply only accounts for 7 per cent of bills, it looks as they may have a point this time. The answer, of course, is for RECs to merge their supply operations, leaving separate companies responsible only for the distribution monopolies. Discussions between RECs are taking place, but this raises a whole new can of competition worms.

If the professor is really determined to bring down electricity bills he should launch a full-scale review of the generation market, which has now been freed from price regulation. Instead he has approached the issue by the back door in the supply price control proposals, suggesting that generation costs will fall, without saying how. The messy approach has left the RECs and generators fighting with the professor and with each other. The sooner we have a complete review of electricity prices, in all their complex guises, the better.

### IN BRIEF

#### Fire damages Eurotunnel's turnover

Last year's fire in the Channel Tunnel hit Eurotunnel's turnover in the first half of this year, according to figures released by the debt-laden group yesterday. In the six months to the end of June turnover fell from £223.6m to £168.8m, though the group said compensation received from insurance companies for the fire damage added £52.4m to revenues. Sales in the second quarter rose to £93.3m from £75.5m in the first three months. The Anglo-French group is in the final stages of renegotiating its £9bn debt burden with banks following shareholders' approval of the scheme, which replaces bank debt with equity, at an acrimonious extraordinary meeting in Paris last month. Freight services resumed through the tunnel on 15 June after a seven-month break. Eurotunnel recently said traffic figures on the tourist Shuttle service were back to pre-fire levels, although the total cross-channel market had expanded by some 15 per cent since last year.

#### Water companies agree compensation

Six more water companies had agreed to offer compensation payments to customers whose supplies were interrupted under drought orders, though nine companies had still to accept the plan, the industry watchdog Ofwat said yesterday. The latest groups to offer schemes include Anglian, Southern, Northumbrian, Severn Trent and Thames, with the changes having taken effect from 8 August. In April, 14 companies agreed to compensate customers, including South West, North West, Wessex and Welsh Water. Domestic customers can claim £10 for each day or part of the day that the supply of water is interrupted, up to a maximum equivalent to the water company's average annual household bill.

For business customers the compensation is £50 a day. Southern Water and Yorkshire Water have yet to agree to compensation schemes.

#### Richards uncovers £530,000 black hole

Richards, the textiles group, has unearthed a black hole of £530,000 at its Tewkesbury home furnishings subsidiary. The company also warned that the continued strength of sterling, particularly against the Belgian franc, was virtually stopping European exports and it was inevitable the group would post a loss for the year to 30 September. The Tewkesbury loss was concealed by misleading accounting information supplied by the subsidiary, partly due to inadequate control systems. The company has restated its six months to March results to show a loss before tax of £350,000, compared with a previously reported profit.

#### Institute calls for pension costs review

The Faculty and Institute of Actuaries has called on the Government to make sure all statutory assessments of pension costs are reviewed following the removal of tax credits from pension schemes. Duncan Ferguson, Institute president, said: "Commentators have suggested this Budget will be neutral for long-term savings. The case is unproven and this Budget will immediately reduce the income stream."

#### Highbury House warns of losses

Highbury House Communications, the publishing group, said trading in the first half of the year had been below expectations and it would make a higher-than-anticipated loss. The company said the disappointing performance had been due to continuing losses at its Trustcare division and a poor first quarter's trading in the original Highbury House publishing business.

#### Securicor and BT take £40m provision

Securicor and British Telecommunications are taking a combined £40m charge this year after a supplier abandoned a project to create a new billing system. BT said it would take a £24m provision and Securicor a £16m provision after the supplier, AMS Management Systems UK, abandoned a contract to create a computerised billing system for Cellnet, a UK mobile phone network owned 40 per cent by Securicor and 60 per cent by BT. The news is a further setback for Cellnet, which trails its three UK mobile phone network competitors in new sales. It will also be a blow to Securicor, which saw its first-half pre-tax profit fall 7 per cent as a result of increased competition for Cellnet and development costs at Intel, its US mobile phone operator.

#### Ockham profits fall to £7.4m

Ockham Holdings remained on the look-out for things to buy, particularly in specialist retail insurance, said chairman Allen Thomas as the company announced a fall in pre-tax profits for the six months to June to £7.4m from £11.4m last time. Highway contributed managing agency profit commission totalling £2.3m against £2.8m. Wise Speke produced a profit before tax of £1.5m. This compares with £1.5m in the first half of last year.

GNVQ

GENERAL NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The learning curve GNVQ to better business

0800 072 1777

## August car sales on track for new record

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Sales of "R" registration new cars soared by 18 per cent in the first 10 days of this month, putting the industry on target for a record-breaking August sales of well over 500,000.

The internal industry figures sent to car companies yesterday by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, showed 208,000 registrations were recorded in the 10-day period, well ahead of even the most optimistic industry expectations. The figures are seen as a clear guide for the whole of August because so many cars are ordered by customers before the start of the month.

Car industry analysts were last night raising their forecasts for this year's August bonanza and predicted sales above the previous August peak of 500,112 in 1989. Some bullish manufacturers had already privately forecast 520,000 registrations this month, but some analysts suggested they could reach 550,000. It could also push sales this year to more than 2.1 million, though they would still be some way off the 2.3 million peak in the boom year of 1989.

Other forecasters were more cautious, pointing to the fact that August this year includes one less selling day than in 1996. Another factor was the trend for customers to "pre-order" cars before the start of the month, which could see sales in the remaining 20 days tail off more sharply.

Last year August was a disappointing month for the industry, with a modest increase in sales to 479,407. Dealers

blamed the lack of interest from private buyers, though this year demand has apparently been boosted by buoyant economic confidence.

But yesterday's figures painted a gloomier picture for "traditional" market leaders such as Ford, which saw its market share plunge to 16 per cent in the first 10 days. It followed a disastrous July for the US giant, which took less than 12 per cent of the British market, one of its lowest figures for decades.

Ford has this year cut incentives to dealers and has retreated from offering big discounts to customers. The company had forecast a modest August this year of less than 495,000 registrations, but has been apparently caught out by demand for other makes.

In contrast, Renault, the French group which has seen its sales surge this year on the back of new model ranges, has gained 7.1 per cent of the market in the first 10 days. Analysts predicted that imports could take a higher share of the market, possibly matching the 70 per cent recorded in July.

Separately, industry sources yesterday warned that the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders was having trouble processing the registration data, blaming the unexpectedly strong demand and a new computer link which connected some manufacturers.

The new computer system is understood to have temporarily failed on the first day of this month. The SMMT has previously denied speculation of problems with its data-processing systems.

Richard Eyre, the incoming chief executive of ITV, yesterday made his first management appointment at Network Centre, giving David Liddiment (above), managing director of Granada's UK broadcasting division, the role of director of programmes, writes Cathy Newman.

The appointment ends months of speculation that Mr Liddiment would take

the position, in effect replacing Marcus Plantin, the outgoing network director.

Mr Liddiment, who is to start the new job at the same time as Mr Eyre at the end of September, said last night: "My job is to make sure we pick the right shows

and schedule them as effectively as possible." He and Mr Eyre are to preside over an increasingly centralised ITV, which in recent months has seen rapid consolidation into the hands of the three players - Granada Group, Carlton Communications and United News & Media.

Mr Liddiment has been in his present role at Granada since last year. Previously, he has been deputy managing director of LWT and head of the BBC's entertainment group. At Granada he was executive producer of Coronation Street for five years.

ITV needs to boost its spending on programmes dramatically to avoid losing viewers to Channel 5 and satellite and cable television, according to new research from Merrill Lynch.

Channel 5 has eaten into ITV's audience share as the network has failed to increase its programming expenditure sufficiently, figures from the investment house show.

ITV, which increased its programme budget by just 3 per cent to £602m for 1996/97, saw its audience share dwindle between April and July from 34.4 per cent last year to 31.6 per cent this year.

Channel 4, which grew its spending on programmes by 16 per cent to £510m this year, increased its audience share from 10.6 per cent last year to 10.7 per cent this year despite the launch of another rival, Channel 5, in the spring.

The Merrill research concludes: "It is no surprise that Channel 4 has held its viewer-share share in 1997 due to its increased firepower, while ITV has seen a significant reduction."

The threat to ITV's audience share will be exacerbated when the Channel 4 funding formula phased out over the next two years. Channel 4 has so far paid the ITV companies £257m through the formula, and has promised to spend the money saved on more original British programmes and films.

## Bank report to study £36bn windfall effect

Nigel Cope  
City Correspondent

The Bank of England announced yesterday it is to commission a special report on the effect of windfall payments from converting buildings into two more companies announced soaring sales boosted by de-mutualisation spending.

Mervyn King, deputy governor of the Bank of England, said the bank estimated the total windfalls to be worth £36bn and that its report on the economic effects should be completed "in a month or so".

The comments came as Airtours, Britain's second largest tour operator, said a combination of the building society windfalls and increased buying power of sterling had boosted its summer bookings both for 1997 and 1998.

Separately, Rosebys, the furnishings group credited the windfall factor for soaring sales of beds. In the five weeks from 30 June sales at its Benson Beds subsidiary were 40 per



## ITV programme budget lacking

Cathy Newman

ITV needs to boost its spending on programmes dramatically to avoid losing viewers to Channel 5 and satellite and cable television, according to new research from Merrill Lynch.

Channel 5 has eaten into

ITV's audience share as the network has failed to increase its programming expenditure sufficiently, figures from the investment house show.

ITV, which increased its pro-

gramme budget by just 3 per cent to £602m for 1996/97, saw its audience share dwindle between April and July from 34.4 per cent last year to 31.6 per cent this year.

Channel 4, which grew its

spending on programmes by 16

per cent to £510m this year,

increased its audience share from 10.6 per cent last year to 10.7 per cent this year despite the launch of another rival, Channel 5, in the spring.

The Merrill research con-

## Hollick rules out cable merger

Cathy Newman

The cable industry was dealt a fresh blow yesterday after it emerged United News & Media, Lord Hollick's media conglomerate, had ruled out joining merger talks with cable operators Telewest and NTL. Separately, NTL also announced a large restructuring which will mean the loss of 50 jobs.

United had been courted by NTL's head, Barclay Knapp, as part of a plan to merge with Telewest to create a rival to Cable & Wireless Communications, the UK's largest cable company. However, a source close to United said yesterday: "United never had any intention of joining the talks."

City observers said United's presence in the merger would have given the consolidated group greater clout, and would have added impetus to the rationalisation of the industry.

NTL, which announced its second-quarter results this morning, said it was merging its three customer operations departments into one over the next six months. Its Fleet office will also be absorbed into offices in Farnborough and Guildford.

A spokeswoman for N

## business

# Struggling BICC ripe for demerger

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY SAMEENA AHMAD

### BICC: At a glance

Market value: £822m share price 162.5p (-7.5%)

Trading record	1994	1995	1996	1996	1997
	Full year			Half year	
Turnover (£m)	3.97	4.38	4.87	2.37	2.22
Pre-tax profits (£m)	131	(67)	64	(2)	55
Earnings per share (p) (Loss)	19.2	(38.3)	(2.2)	(0.9)	4.6
Dividends per share (p)	14.28	12.22	12.41	3.91	4.0

BICC divisions	Share price	
	Operating profit before exceptional (£m)	pence
First half 1996	80	450
First half 1997	20	200

**B**ICC is in a mess. Both of its two core businesses, power cables and construction, are inherently unattractive. Despite reasonable market positions, price competition from rivals and falling demand ahead of utility privatisations is squeezing already wafer-thin margins. Investors have had a rotten deal. A rights issue at 270p a share in September - BICC's shares, down 7.5p are now 162.5p - was swiftly followed in May by a profits warning. And Alan Jones, new broom chief executive, has failed to be radical enough to satisfy the City.

Since his appointment in 1995, BICC's shares have underperformed the market by 70 per cent. BICC's problems are evidenced in yesterday's half-year figures. Underlying profits for the six months to June fell 13 per cent to £55m on turnover 6 per cent down. Though better contract picking helped Balfour Beatty, BICC's construction arm, improve profits from £1m to £15m, the European power cables business was dire. Cables profits almost halved to £28m, hit by reduced infrastructure spending ahead of monetary union, falling demand in the key Italian market ahead of the telecoms privatisation and competition in Germany.

What's more, on NatWest Securities forecasts of 11.3p earnings in the full year, BICC is heading for yet another uncovered dividend on a likely maintained 12.4p full-year payout. Though BICC has cash, an uncovered dividend never looks good. The group should cut its dividend again, but that would take guts after the rights issue.

So what should Mr Jones do? After more than two years as chief executive, surely it is time for something brave. The planned chop of 350 jobs in Italy hardly fits that bill. More interesting is the suggestion that something is afoot in German cable.

Though Mr Jones says nothing more than the German business is to "reposition", and that with 39 per cent gearing, the balance sheet is not constrained, observers reckon BICC is about to cuddle up to one of its big power cable competitors - such as Siemens of Germany or Alcatel Alsthom of France.

What is likely is a limited joint venture in Germany. But if BICC really wants to help itself, it needs a big, pan-European deal. Such a joint venture with, say, Siemens would allow BICC to reap huge economies of scale, close loss-making plants and give it access to Siemens' strong brand, distribution and marketing.

But that alone is not enough. To fully realise value, BICC needs to demerge the construction business. Mr Jones' argument that the group needs the cash of cable to strike good construction deals is weak. What a demerger would do, by motivating management and improving performance, is expose Balfour to a potential bidder. But even excluding bid

speculation, NatWest believes the group's break-up value alone would be 100p above the present value at 260p a share, even after stripping out debt and convertible preference shares. There is potential in BICC, but to realise it will take bold steps.

### Copthorne's rates have room to grow

**T**he hotels sector has been under a cloud recently due to the City's concerns over growth in capacity and the effects of the strong pound on overseas visitor levels to London.

But while these reservations have hit shares, the operators themselves have stayed jolly about prospects.

Stakat reported good figures last month and yesterday Millennium & Copthorne did the same.

The 24-strong hotels group, which has proved to be one of the best of last year's crop of new issues, enjoyed a 53 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £19.9m in the six months to June.

On a pro forma basis, which as-

sumes the group owned its New York hotels for the whole of the previous year, operating profits rose 37 per cent to £27.3m.

The figures are particularly impressive as they include £1m of closure costs for the Commodore hotel in Paris, which will undergo a nine-month revamp.

So far Copthorne seems to be shrugging off the worries of the sector's doomsters.

Finance director David Cook says that as 75 per cent of its customers are business travellers, the strength of the pound has a limited effect. And 60 per cent of visitors to its London hotels come from the UK.

Copthorne disagrees with reports that suggest an additional 10,000 beds are coming on stream in the UK over the next few years and says most of the additional capacity will be in the peripheral areas of London rather than in the centre of the capital.

Occupancy on a pro forma basis increased by 3 percentage points to a healthy 76.9 per cent, which provides limited headroom. But the upside is that the group is able to increase room rates, with the average rising by 5 per cent to £80.70.

Copthorne's rates have room to grow as the group's break-up value alone would be 100p above the present value at 260p a share, even after stripping out debt and convertible preference shares. There is potential in BICC, but to realise it will take bold steps.

So far Copthorne seems to be shrugging off the worries of the sector's doomsters.

Finance director David Cook says that as 75 per cent of its customers are business travellers, the strength of the pound has a limited effect. And 60 per cent of visitors to its London hotels come from the UK.

Copthorne disagrees with reports that suggest an additional 10,000 beds are coming on stream in the UK over the next few years and says most of the additional capacity will be in the peripheral areas of London rather than in the centre of the capital.

Occupancy on a pro forma basis increased by 3 percentage points to a healthy 76.9 per cent, which provides limited headroom. But the upside is that the group is able to increase room rates, with the average rising by 5 per cent to £80.70.

Copthorne's rates have room to grow as the group's break-up value alone would be 100p above the present value at 260p a share, even after stripping out debt and convertible preference shares. There is potential in BICC, but to realise it will take bold steps.

So far Copthorne seems to be shrugging off the worries of the sector's doomsters.

Finance director David Cook says that as 75 per cent of its customers are business travellers, the strength of the pound has a limited effect. And 60 per cent of visitors to its London hotels come from the UK.

Copthorne disagrees with reports that suggest an additional 10,000 beds are coming on stream in the UK over the next few years and says most of the additional capacity will be in the peripheral areas of London rather than in the centre of the capital.

Occupancy on a pro forma basis increased by 3 percentage points to a healthy 76.9 per cent, which provides limited headroom. But the upside is that the group is able to increase room rates, with the average rising by 5 per cent to £80.70.

Copthorne's rates have room to grow as the group's break-up value alone would be 100p above the present value at 260p a share, even after stripping out debt and convertible preference shares. There is potential in BICC, but to realise it will take bold steps.

So far Copthorne seems to be shrugging off the worries of the sector's doomsters.

Finance director David Cook says that as 75 per cent of its customers are business travellers, the strength of the pound has a limited effect. And 60 per cent of visitors to its London hotels come from the UK.

Copthorne disagrees with reports that suggest an additional 10,000 beds are coming on stream in the UK over the next few years and says most of the additional capacity will be in the peripheral areas of London rather than in the centre of the capital.

Occupancy on a pro forma basis increased by 3 percentage points to a healthy 76.9 per cent, which provides limited headroom. But the upside is that the group is able to increase room rates, with the average rising by 5 per cent to £80.70.

Copthorne's rates have room to grow as the group's break-up value alone would be 100p above the present value at 260p a share, even after stripping out debt and convertible preference shares. There is potential in BICC, but to realise it will take bold steps.

So far Copthorne seems to be shrugging off the worries of the sector's doomsters.

Finance director David Cook says that as 75 per cent of its customers are business travellers, the strength of the pound has a limited effect. And 60 per cent of visitors to its London hotels come from the UK.

Copthorne disagrees with reports that suggest an additional 10,000 beds are coming on stream in the UK over the next few years and says most of the additional capacity will be in the peripheral areas of London rather than in the centre of the capital.

Occupancy on a pro forma basis increased by 3 percentage points to a healthy 76.9 per cent, which provides limited headroom. But the upside is that the group is able to increase room rates, with the average rising by 5 per cent to £80.70.

Copthorne's rates have room to grow as the group's break-up value alone would be 100p above the present value at 260p a share, even after stripping out debt and convertible preference shares. There is potential in BICC, but to realise it will take bold steps.

Expect more rate hikes and some selective acquisitions from the new managing director, John O'Shea.

Upgraded forecasts of £48.5m for the full year, the shares trade on a forward rating of 15.

At 378.5p, up 10p yesterday and a full 100p on the 278p issue price last April, the shares are worth a look.

### War games are a serious business

**F**orget the moonies and Freemasons. Fantasy war games are the cult of the Nineties - especially for all those boys out there who have never quite grown up.

Tom Kirby, chief executive and soon-to-be chairman of Games Workshop, is one such chap.

Founder of the highly successful games company, he shuns grown-up City clothes for jeans and T-shirts and talks excitedly about the new Gorkamorka game where green-skinned miniature monsters with long tusks do battle riding around in bugies.

Unlike conventional toy companies such as Bluebird, which struggle to keep pace with the passing whims of fickle children, Games Workshop's toys - miniature fantasy collectibles - are a serious hobby for dedicated enthusiasts.

Three-quarters of buyers are males over 12 years and, of those, a quarter are adults.

In fact, the Games Workshop business is more akin to a razor-and-blade company such as Gillette.

For every £50 an average devotee spends on the basic games kit - a board, a few miniatures and a rulebook - he will spend another £200 over the next two years building up the collection. What's more, the appeal seems to cross cultural barriers.

Yesterday's full-year numbers to June - profits rose 26 per cent to £11m after a £2.5m currency hit, leaving the shares 6.5p higher at 575p - showed rapid expansion in continental Europe, now more than a third of the total, particularly Germany and Spain. Business has also been growing quickly in Australia.

Japan, with its tradition of often-violent fantasy "manga" comics, should be an ideal war games market.

Meanwhile there is plenty still to do in the UK. Mr Kirby says there is room to add another 100 shops here, doubling UK capacity.

With like-for-like sales growth of more than 40 per cent, Games Workshop can certainly justify the plans.

House broker Credit Lyonnais Laing forecasts £13m profits next year. On a forward PE ratio of 22 next year, falling to 18 times, the shares are still good value.

The market refused to be cowed, however, and the shares, which have enjoyed a great run since being floated at 65p when the company floated four years ago, failed to recover.

All four retail businesses have performed well and contributed £402,000 to operating profits. But the real surge in sales and profits has come from the mail order businesses which grew sales by 56 per cent to £15.3m and profits to £3.2m. Operating margin increased from 17.6 per cent to 21.0 per cent.

The mail order side of the business as a whole, including Gardening Direct and Blooms, which specialises in perennial, annuals, are likely to continue to outgrow the original cut flower and retail parts of the business.

The original business was

# Flying Flowers issues warning of slower growth

## Clifford German

Flying Flowers, the Jersey-based mail-order horticulturalists, warned yesterday that its rapid growth will slow in the second half. The shares fell 17.5p to 384.5p even though the group announced sales rose by 54 per cent to £23.7m and profits by 106 per cent to £3.37m in the six months to the end of June.

First-half figures have been boosted by contributions from three business acquired a year ago for £1m. Second-half figures will get a lesser boost. The surge was also helped by the trebling of sales through the mail order brand, Gardening Direct, which accounted for a quarter of group sales in the latest results, and is seasonally biased towards the first half of the year.

Historically profits have split roughly one-third in the first half and two-thirds in the second. In future the split is likely to be virtually even. Growth in the second half is more likely to be 30-40 per cent but the brokers Beeson Gregory have increased their profit forecast for the full year from £6.1m to £6.3m on the basis of the first half-figures.

The market refused to be cowed, however, and the shares, which have enjoyed a great run since being floated at 65p when the company floated four years ago, failed to recover.

All four retail businesses have performed well and contributed £402,000 to operating profits. But the real surge in sales and profits has come from the mail order businesses which grew sales by 56 per cent to £15.3m and profits to £3.2m. Operating margin increased from 17.6 per cent to 21.0 per cent.

The mail order side of the business as a whole, including Gardening Direct and Blooms, which specialises in perennial, annuals, are likely to continue to outgrow the original cut flower and retail parts of the business.

The original business was



Sales of bedding plants are set to outgrow the original cut flower and retail parts of the business

## Independent insurer seeks deals overseas

### Nigel Cope

Independent Insurance reported a 20 per cent rise in first-half profits yesterday but cautioned that it did not expect any significant upturn in the UK insurance market until late 1998.

However, the company expressed confidence about its own prospects despite tough conditions and said it was on the look-out for acquisitions. The group's chief executive, Michael Bright, bought £1m of shares, taking his holding to 5.5 per cent. Three other directors also bought stock. The shares jumped 35p to 945p.

Independent said it was looking for commercial underwriting deals in France and Spain. In the UK it is hoping that rationalisation will offer opportunity

ties to buy UK subsidiaries or accounts.

"The company's market capitalisation is now over £400m so our ambitions can be quite considerable," Mr Bright said. "We are prepared to issue paper for the right deal."

He said that while competition remained intense the outlook was improving. "There is perhaps less stupidity in the market than there was 12 months ago."

Pre-tax profits in the six months to 30 June were 20 per cent higher at £20m. Long-term policy arrangements led to growth in gross written premiums, up by 16 per cent to £270m. However the underlying position was flat, affected by a reduction in motor income as well as a fall in premiums at its French subsidiary.

Independent said it was looking for commercial underwriting deals in France and Spain. In the UK it is hoping that rationalisation will offer opportunity

### Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre



# Time to start practising for single currency membership



**Christopher Johnson**

**Before EMU entry, the UK should try to achieve the Maastricht exchange rate stability criterion**

low German levels, but British rates would be lower, not higher, than now. The exchange rate against the German mark would no longer exist, but if we had entered the euro at DM2.50, British manufacturing exports would be competitive and profitable.

Before EMU entry, the UK should try to achieve the Maastricht exchange rate stability criterion. The Treasury maintains that this need not involve rejoining the ERM, but it must then mean stability by some other definition. The pound has been highly unstable over the past year. The UK has to get it down to around DM2.50 to satisfy the CBI, and keep it close to that level to satisfy our EU partners.

Talking the pound down, or selling it down, or even announcing that the UK will join the euro, will have only a limited effect if monetary policy is facing in the opposite direction. The UK has to learn to live, not with disconcertingly large interest rate changes of the kind once implied by ERM membership, but with almost imperceptible

touches on the tiller. The European Central Bank will have to set Europe-wide interest rates sufficient for up to 15 countries in different stages of the economic cycle.

The end of monetary policy activism means the revival of fiscal policy activism. The fashion among economists is to applaud the flexibility and effectiveness of monetary policy, and to denounce a more active fiscal policy as cumbersome in execution and uncertain in effect. In fact both kinds of policy have drawbacks linked with uncertainty over the size of their effects and the timescale over which they operate. That is no reason for not honing the instruments and trying to use them more effectively.

Fiscal policy is in fact the main area in which governments will retain economic independence under EMU, as long as they observe the 3 per cent deficit limit and the Stability Pact. These are widely accepted as desirable in their own right for sound national reasons.

In present UK circumstances, an independent Bank of England trying to mimic a European monetary policy would have urged the Treasury to adopt a tighter fiscal stance in the June Budget. The Treasury would have taken the view that the peak of a consumer boom was the right moment to move to the balanced or small surplus objective of the Stability Pact, so as to leave some leeway within the 3 per cent limit. National economic policy thus would have coincided with the needs of the EMU framework.

In 1997-98, the general government financial deficit on the Maastricht definition is set at 1.4 per cent of GDP by the Budget. Budget balance on the UK definition would have meant a further fiscal tightening of £1.3bn over and above the £6bn from the Budget tax increases. There is every sign that New Labour, like Old Tories, has condemned itself to the familiar stop-go cycle, with the difference that the stop may come uncomfortably close to the next election. If EMU makes Britain take better economic decisions it would take left to its own devices, that should settle the matter. It need not be nearly as unpleasant as the IMF medicine which Old Labour swallowed in 1976.

Christopher Johnson was a specialist adviser to the Treasury Select Committee from 1981 to 1997.

**Both the CBI and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have come out with an "Augustinian" policy on the euro: "Oh God, let us join, but not yet". The Chancellor has not ruled out the UK joining in the first wave on 1 January 1999, but the mix of fiscal and monetary policy measures taken by himself and the Bank of England make it highly unlikely.**

**My argument is that the new policy regime and the policy mix are wrong, both from the point of view of optimal UK economic management, and from the point of view of preparing ourselves for single currency membership.**

The independence of a finance ministry and a central bank from each other is like independent taxation of husband and wife in a household. If independence means that each side acts without being privy to the other's plans, the financial results are less good than if the two collude to derive maximum benefit from independent status. The Maastricht Treaty, but not the new British regime, goes some way towards this by giving the presidents of the European Central Bank and the European Council of Ministers observer status at each other's meetings.

The use of interest rates as the main instrument to cool an overheated economy has shown not only the failings of the new regime but the disadvantages of not having monetary union here and now. The rises in short-term UK interest rates have led to an upwards overshooting of the pound, fall in exports, and stagnation of manufacturing output.

To Eurosceptics, it has been proved that the UK needs a different interest rate and exchange rate from the rest of Europe, rather than a single monetary policy and an end to exchange rate changes. My argument to the contrary is that as long as the UK stays out of EMU, our independent national economic policy will ensure that we never converge sufficiently to join.

Were we in a monetary union today, short-term euro interest rates might now be rising from present

levels on the tiller. The European Central Bank will have to set Europe-wide interest rates sufficient for up to 15 countries in different stages of the economic cycle.

The end of monetary policy activism means the revival of fiscal policy activism. The fashion among economists is to applaud the flexibility and effectiveness of monetary policy, and to denounce a more active fiscal policy as cumbersome in execution and uncertain in effect. In fact both kinds of policy have drawbacks linked with uncertainty over the size of their effects and the timescale over which they operate. That is no reason for not honing the instruments and trying to use them more effectively.

Fiscal policy is in fact the main area in which governments will retain economic independence under EMU, as long as they observe the 3 per cent deficit limit and the Stability Pact. These are widely accepted as desirable in their own right for sound national reasons.

In present UK circumstances, an independent Bank of England trying to mimic a European monetary policy would have urged the Treasury to adopt a tighter fiscal stance in the June Budget. The Treasury would have taken the view that the peak of a consumer boom was the right moment to move to the balanced or small surplus objective of the Stability Pact, so as to leave some leeway within the 3 per cent limit. National economic policy thus would have coincided with the needs of the EMU framework.

In 1997-98, the general government financial deficit on the Maastricht definition is set at 1.4 per cent of GDP by the Budget. Budget balance on the UK definition would have meant a further fiscal tightening of £1.3bn over and above the £6bn from the Budget tax increases. There is every sign that New Labour, like Old Tories, has condemned itself to the familiar stop-go cycle, with the difference that the stop may come uncomfortably close to the next election. If EMU makes Britain take better economic decisions it would take left to its own devices, that should settle the matter. It need not be nearly as unpleasant as the IMF medicine which Old Labour swallowed in 1976.

Christopher Johnson was a specialist adviser to the Treasury Select Committee from 1981 to 1997.

# London's Lord Mayor gets in gear for Cancer Research

## PEOPLE & BUSINESS



all sorts of trouble with a wallpaper scraper.

SmithKline Beecham has poached Dr David C U'Prichard from Zeneca to be its new chairman of research and development, a prestigious appointment in the drugs industry. Dr U'Prichard (pronounced "You Prichard") joins on 1 September.

The doctor is a 49-year-old Scot. He succeeds Dr George Poste, who was recently named SmithKline's chief science and technology officer. Dr Poste is known for almost masochistic levels of hard work - reading through up to 2,000 pages of research a day, according to industry legend. He's currently giving his grey matter a rest with a two-week holiday in Arizona.

There are scurrilous rumours circulating in the telecoms world that a group of BT bigwigs flew in to Washington recently to probe MCI's various profit warnings, only to be blocked by immigration officials. The immigration guys decided that the BT party needed "lengthy stay" visas rather than the temporary documentation they had arrived with. Does US Immigration know something about MCI we don't?

Alan C Greenberg became chairman of Bear Stearns, the Wall Street investment bank, in 1978, and since then he has helped transform it into a global player. Now he's written a book, *Memos from the Chairman*, which is just that: a collection of his more pungent memos to staff and fellow directors spanning the past 20 years.

"Ace" Greenberg frequently quotes his guru, a "famous philosopher" called Haimbekel Mainitz Anaynikal. One such quote: "Thou will do well in commerce as long as thou does not believe thine own odour is perfume."

Sound advice. Mr Greenberg also mentions another guru in the book, intriguingly named "Nookie". A racy place, Wall Street.

**John Willcock**

On his bike: Sir Roger Cork with the Sheriff of Nottingham

share his cave in return for a haunch of venison each week?"

It's nice to see that John Major isn't going short of work. According to the latest issue of *Business Week*, Mr Major will be speaking at the Tenth Annual Business Week Symposium of Chief Executive Officers in Washington DC in October.

The mag says that CEO 2000 is a "premier gathering of America's business leaders [which] will feature the CEOs of the nation's largest corporations as well as some of today's leading commentators and historians".

So which is our John - commentator or historian?

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) has a new chief executive, Dr John Hooper, and new director of business development, Julie Cathederal. The duo plans to increase RoSPA's lobbying for changes in law, policies and practices, as well as focusing more on safety in education and in the home.

Perhaps this is connected with Dr Hooper listing his favourite hobby as DIY. You can get into

### Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling		Dollar		D-Mark	
	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	15803	20.18	59.56	1000	-	64560
Canada	21529	71.65	209.27	13221	35.31	87650
Germany	20020	70.25	209.73	13221	35.31	87650
France	97569	247.20	350.76	13221	35.31	87650
Italy	28212	0.24	16.07	7510	17.19	97284
Japan	12233	105.10	337.52	13251	52.51	30625
Australia	14743	105.10	337.52	13251	52.51	30625
New Zealand	11029	240.20	350.76	13221	35.31	87650
Saudi Arabia	32594	35.31	106.56	13221	35.31	87650
Singapore	32594	35.31	106.56	13221	35.31	87650

### Interest Rates

UK	Base		Germany		US		Japan	
	7.00%	Discount	2.50%	Lombard	2.50%	Discount	Belgium	0.50%
France	3.30%	Discount	2.50%	Bank	2.50%	Discount	2.50%	0.50%
Portugal	6.25%	Discount	2.50%	Bank	2.50%	Discount	2.50%	0.50%
Netherlands	3.00%	Discount	2.50%	Denmark	2.50%	Discount	2.50%	0.50%
Advances				Sweden	2.50%	Discount	2.50%	0.50%

### Bond Yields

Country	Syr	yield %	1yr	yield %	Country	Syr	yield %	1yr	yield %
UK	7.00%	7.04	7.25%	7.07	Netherlands	2.20%	4.80	5.75%	5.84
Ireland	6.12%	6.19	6.25%	6.27	Spain	7.50	6.84	7.25%	7.37
Spain	5.50%	5.29	5.50%	5.50	Italy	6.25	5.33	6.75%	8.70
Sweden	5.21%	5.20	5.21	5.21	Belgium	9.00%	4.88	6.25%	5.78
Switzerland	2.35%	2.30	2.35	2.35	Denmark	5.70	5.70	5.70	5.70
Australia	10.00%	6.27	6.75%	6.68	Sweden	13.00%	5.68	6.50%	6.55
Germany	4.75%	4.93	6.00%	5.70	ECU OAT	5.00	5.00	5.50%	5.50
France	4.75%	4.78	5.50%	5.61					

Yields calculated on local basis.

Interest rates

in new benchmark

Money Market Rates

Country	OTC		7 Day		1 Month		3 Months		6 Months		1 Year	
---------	-----	--	-------	--	---------	--	----------	--	----------	--	--------	--

## America's long wait comes to an end

**Sailing**

STUART ALEXANDER

reports from Plymouth

The Star Spangled Banner was playing here yesterday to celebrate the first United States win in the Admiral's Cup since 1969. It has been a long wait but there was almost as loud a cheer for Britain's John Merricks and Ian Walker as they trounced their 36ft divisional rivals to end as the top scorer in their class over the nine-race series and make the classic Fastnet Race their first offshore win.

The late charge by the defending Italians to deny the Americans for the second cup in succession founded in early morning light airs and a lottery of a finish off Queen Anne's Battery for the 40-footers. Italy's Brava Q8 had led nearly all the way round the 610-mile course, but she could do nothing when stuck with the line in sight as first Germany's Pinata and then America's MK Cafe found some breeze and sailed straight past.

Brava Q8 finished sixth as the Italians had to settle for third place overall, behind Germany as well as the Americans. Flash Gordon, from the States, was the top individual boat.

"A year ago we were being presented with our Olympic silver medals in Savannah, both proud and slightly disappointed," Merricks said. "Today we are very happy to have achieved such an excellent result. It's been a huge transition in six months and we hope to move on to bigger boats - but this weekend we fly to Israel for the 470 World Championships."

Other winning signs for Britain, despite finishing fifth overall and last lifting the cup in 1989, were the performances on Graham Walker's big boat, Corum Indulgences and the declaration by the 40-footer owner, Tony Buckingham, that he would be back in 1999 with more firepower.

Having to be more philosophical were the New Zealanders, who went into the Fastnet lying second to America, took a team tactical decision to head off to the Channel last Saturday night, andived embarrassingly to sixth overall.

Results, Digest, page 23



Tiger Woods tests the rough at Winged Foot yesterday in practice for the USPGA Championship. Photograph: AFP

## USPGA CHAMPIONSHIP: Mickelson and Montgomerie seem to pose biggest threat to hopes of young Master Woods goes in search of a first double

ANDY FARRELL

reports from New York

A year ago, Tiger Woods was preparing for what would be a record third straight US Amateur victory. "It seems like about 10 years ago," Woods said. "My life has changed a lot." For everything the 21-year-old Masters champion has done and gone through in the last 12 months, Winged Foot will prove a new experience.

This is Woods' first appearance in the USPGA Championship, and he is making his debut in style by teeing up today in the "champions' three-ball" with the US Open winner, Ernie Els, and the Open champion, Justin Leonard. The scenario at least had the young superstar chuckling to himself.

Victory on Sunday would mean Woods becoming the first player, in his first year as a professional, to win two majors. After not contending at the US Open or the Open at Royal Troon, it would be a feat Woods might appreciate more than when he helped fuel wild speculation about his winning the Grand Slam after Augusta.

"Realistically, it's almost next to impossible to win all four," Woods admitted. "Playing at the US Open was an incredible test of patience and it put more emphasis on ball-striking than Augusta did. At the British Open you have to understand you are going to get some bad

bounces. Majors test every face of your game, as well they should, but more importantly, they're going to test your mind. Augusta was one of those lifetime experiences when you play that well and it happened to be in a major. I was lucky to have everything gel together for 63 holes, which you don't find very often. At the US Open, I didn't drive the ball particularly well and it's awfully tough to play the US Open when you're not driving the ball well. At the British Open, I actually played pretty good. I just had three bad holes. Take those away and put pars on the card, I finished second."

Woods has been helped in his preparations by the fact that his coach, Butch Harmon, grew up at least had the young superstar chuckling to himself.

Victory on Sunday would mean Woods becoming the first player, in his first year as a professional, to win two majors. After not contending at the US Open or the Open at Royal Troon, it would be a feat Woods might appreciate more than when he helped fuel wild speculation about his winning the Grand Slam after Augusta.

"Realistically, it's almost next to impossible to win all four," Woods admitted. "Playing at the US Open was an incredible test of patience and it put more emphasis on ball-striking than Augusta did. At the British Open you have to understand you are going to get some bad

bounces. Majors test every face of your game, as well they should, but more importantly, they're going to test your mind. Augusta was one of those lifetime experiences when you play that well and it happened to be in a major. I was lucky to have everything gel together for 63 holes, which you don't find very often. At the US Open, I didn't drive the ball particularly well and it's awfully tough to play the US Open when you're not driving the ball well. At the British Open, I actually played pretty good. I just had three bad holes. Take those away and put pars on the card, I finished second."

Woods has been helped in his preparations by the fact that his coach, Butch Harmon, grew

up at least had the young superstar chuckling to himself.

Victory on Sunday would mean Woods becoming the first player, in his first year as a professional, to win two majors. After not contending at the US Open or the Open at Royal Troon, it would be a feat Woods might appreciate more than when he helped fuel wild speculation about his winning the Grand Slam after Augusta.

"Realistically, it's almost next to impossible to win all four," Woods admitted. "Playing at the US Open was an incredible test of patience and it put more emphasis on ball-striking than Augusta did. At the British Open you have to understand you are going to get some bad

bounces. Majors test every face of your game, as well they should, but more importantly, they're going to test your mind. Augusta was one of those lifetime experiences when you play that well and it happened to be in a major. I was lucky to have everything gel together for 63 holes, which you don't find very often. At the US Open, I didn't drive the ball particularly well and it's awfully tough to play the US Open when you're not driving the ball well. At the British Open, I actually played pretty good. I just had three bad holes. Take those away and put pars on the card, I finished second."

Woods has been helped in his preparations by the fact that his coach, Butch Harmon, grew

up at least had the young superstar chuckling to himself.

Victory on Sunday would mean Woods becoming the first player, in his first year as a professional, to win two majors. After not contending at the US Open or the Open at Royal Troon, it would be a feat Woods might appreciate more than when he helped fuel wild speculation about his winning the Grand Slam after Augusta.

"Realistically, it's almost next to impossible to win all four," Woods admitted. "Playing at the US Open was an incredible test of patience and it put more emphasis on ball-striking than Augusta did. At the British Open you have to understand you are going to get some bad

bounces. Majors test every face of your game, as well they should, but more importantly, they're going to test your mind. Augusta was one of those lifetime experiences when you play that well and it happened to be in a major. I was lucky to have everything gel together for 63 holes, which you don't find very often. At the US Open, I didn't drive the ball particularly well and it's awfully tough to play the US Open when you're not driving the ball well. At the British Open, I actually played pretty good. I just had three bad holes. Take those away and put pars on the card, I finished second."

Woods has been helped in his preparations by the fact that his coach, Butch Harmon, grew

up at least had the young superstar chuckling to himself.

Victory on Sunday would mean Woods becoming the first player, in his first year as a professional, to win two majors. After not contending at the US Open or the Open at Royal Troon, it would be a feat Woods might appreciate more than when he helped fuel wild speculation about his winning the Grand Slam after Augusta.

"Realistically, it's almost next to impossible to win all four," Woods admitted. "Playing at the US Open was an incredible test of patience and it put more emphasis on ball-striking than Augusta did. At the British Open you have to understand you are going to get some bad

bounces. Majors test every face of your game, as well they should, but more importantly, they're going to test your mind. Augusta was one of those lifetime experiences when you play that well and it happened to be in a major. I was lucky to have everything gel together for 63 holes, which you don't find very often. At the US Open, I didn't drive the ball particularly well and it's awfully tough to play the US Open when you're not driving the ball well. At the British Open, I actually played pretty good. I just had three bad holes. Take those away and put pars on the card, I finished second."

Woods has been helped in his preparations by the fact that his coach, Butch Harmon, grew

up at least had the young superstar chuckling to himself.

Victory on Sunday would mean Woods becoming the first player, in his first year as a professional, to win two majors. After not contending at the US Open or the Open at Royal Troon, it would be a feat Woods might appreciate more than when he helped fuel wild speculation about his winning the Grand Slam after Augusta.

"Realistically, it's almost next to impossible to win all four," Woods admitted. "Playing at the US Open was an incredible test of patience and it put more emphasis on ball-striking than Augusta did. At the British Open you have to understand you are going to get some bad

bounces. Majors test every face of your game, as well they should, but more importantly, they're going to test your mind. Augusta was one of those lifetime experiences when you play that well and it happened to be in a major. I was lucky to have everything gel together for 63 holes, which you don't find very often. At the US Open, I didn't drive the ball particularly well and it's awfully tough to play the US Open when you're not driving the ball well. At the British Open, I actually played pretty good. I just had three bad holes. Take those away and put pars on the card, I finished second."

Woods has been helped in his preparations by the fact that his coach, Butch Harmon, grew

up at least had the young superstar chuckling to himself.

Victory on Sunday would mean Woods becoming the first player, in his first year as a professional, to win two majors. After not contending at the US Open or the Open at Royal Troon, it would be a feat Woods might appreciate more than when he helped fuel wild speculation about his winning the Grand Slam after Augusta.

"Realistically, it's almost next to impossible to win all four," Woods admitted. "Playing at the US Open was an incredible test of patience and it put more emphasis on ball-striking than Augusta did. At the British Open you have to understand you are going to get some bad

bounces. Majors test every face of your game, as well they should, but more importantly, they're going to test your mind. Augusta was one of those lifetime experiences when you play that well and it happened to be in a major. I was lucky to have everything gel together for 63 holes, which you don't find very often. At the US Open, I didn't drive the ball particularly well and it's awfully tough to play the US Open when you're not driving the ball well. At the British Open, I actually played pretty good. I just had three bad holes. Take those away and put pars on the card, I finished second."

Woods has been helped in his preparations by the fact that his coach, Butch Harmon, grew

up at least had the young superstar chuckling to himself.

Victory on Sunday would mean Woods becoming the first player, in his first year as a professional, to win two majors. After not contending at the US Open or the Open at Royal Troon, it would be a feat Woods might appreciate more than when he helped fuel wild speculation about his winning the Grand Slam after Augusta.

"Realistically, it's almost next to impossible to win all four," Woods admitted. "Playing at the US Open was an incredible test of patience and it put more emphasis on ball-striking than Augusta did. At the British Open you have to understand you are going to get some bad

## Big handicaps lure punters

William Hill reported a busy betting day yesterday on Saturday's Great St Wilfrid Handicap at Ripon with most of the market leaders for the six furlong race attracting support.

Puce (7-1 from 8-1) and Bimsey (14-1 from 16-1) were the best-backed horses for next Wednesday's Ebor Handicap over five furlongs and 194 yards at York with William Hill. Great St Wilfrid Handicap (Horses 16 betting): 6-1, My Best Valentine; 10-3, Fairway Lane; 9-1, Double Oscar; 12-1, Double Oscar; 13-1, Double Oscar; 14-1, Double Oscar; 15-1, Double Oscar; 16-1, Double Oscar; 17-1, Double Oscar; 18-1, Double Oscar; 19-1, Double Oscar; 20-1, Double Oscar.

Bimsey was buoyed by the news that the club's general manager, Colin Burns, thought the Scot would win at seven under. "Then I'd win by seven," Monty said. "I'd take anything under par now and fly back for the presentation."

Evening results, page 23

## Singspiel receives international call-up

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

The theory that the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes may have been the terminus for several careers will get its first testing in the International Stakes at York next week. Singspiel, who finished fourth in the Ascot race last year, is set to go to the Knave of Hearts at York on Sunday.

Singspiel's trainer, Richard Stoute, is not worried. "Although Entrepreneur worked pleasingly, we feel he would benefit from a little more time."

RICHARD EDMONDSON  
NAP: Dibab  
(Beversley 3.35)  
NB: Bound to Please  
(Sandown 2.15)

As Singspiel will instead be challenged by Bosni Sham, Benny the Dip and Desert King next Tuesday, there will be blandishments to the effect that this is the second race of the decade inside a month. York

may not possess the overall strength of Ascot's field, but it will display a wider range of attraction with a top class filly plus two of the best horses from the Classic generation.

Desert King, the Irish 2,000 Guineas and Derby winner will, like all Aidan O'Brien's horses at the Ebor meeting, be ridden by Michael Kinane. It was revealed this week that the Baldydoyle horses competing outside Ireland will not be ridden by their regular domestic partner, and as Christy Roche is 47, it is unlikely he will be riding for O'Brien within his home shores for much longer either.

Other riding arrangements have yet to be finalised. Frankie Dettori is expected to ride

Singspiel, as the Godolphin entry of Alhaarth and Allied Forces have alternative engagements, but his name is also in the hat for the appointment with Benny the Dip. Other candidates for John Gosden's horse include Olivier Peslier, the French champion who won the Dante Stakes on the colt, and Willie Ryan, his Derby-winning partner. It is thought that London Knight, Benny the Dip's owner, wants Pester, Gosden wants Dettori and Ryan wants Ryan.

Bosni Sham will be piloted by Pat Eddery now that Kieren Fallon has been too naughty on the racecourse for the liking of the filly's owner, Wasif Said. She worked well on Saturday and

galloped beautifully on Tuesday on Newmarket's Racecourse Side, fuelling the belief she can be Henry Cecil's first winner of the race since Willow in 1976. Warren Place also fields Bold Fact in the Gimcrack at the meeting, which means you should make sure there are a few people between you and the stands running rail next Wednesday. If Bold Fact swerves away his chance there should still be a Cecil juvenile winner in the shape of Chester House. The Goodwood winner scored on his debut rather scrappily but continues to work well and will be a short price for Tuesday's Acorn Stakes.

Desert King will be piloted by Pat Eddery now that Kieren Fallon has been too naughty on the racecourse for the liking of the filly's owner, Wasif Said. She worked well on Saturday and

galloped beautifully on Tuesday on Newmarket's Racecourse Side, fuelling the belief she can be Henry Cecil's first winner of the race since Willow in 1976. Warren Place also fields Bold Fact in the Gimcrack at the meeting, which means you should make sure there are a few people between you and the stands running rail next Wednesday. If Bold Fact swerves away his chance there should still be a Cecil juvenile winner in the shape of Chester House. The Goodwood winner scored on his debut rather scrappily but continues to work well and will be a short price for Tuesday's Acorn Stakes.

Desert King will be piloted by Pat Eddery now that Kieren Fallon has been too naughty on the racecourse for the liking of the filly's owner, Wasif Said. She worked well on Saturday and

galloped beautifully on Tuesday on Newmarket's Racecourse Side, fuelling the belief she can be Henry Cecil's first winner of the race since Willow in 1976. Warren Place also fields Bold Fact in the Gimcrack at the meeting, which means you should make sure there are a few people between you and the stands running rail next Wednesday. If Bold Fact swerves away his chance there should still be a Cecil juvenile winner in the shape of Chester House. The Goodwood winner scored on his debut rather scrappily but continues to work well and will be a short price for Tuesday's Acorn Stakes.

Desert King will be piloted by Pat Eddery now that Kieren Fallon has been too naughty on the racecourse for the liking of the filly's owner, Wasif Said. She worked well on Saturday and

galloped beautifully on Tuesday on Newmarket's Racecourse Side, fuelling the belief she can be Henry Cecil's first winner of the race since Willow in 1976. Warren Place also fields Bold Fact in the Gimcrack at the meeting, which means you should make sure there are a few people between you and the stands running rail next Wednesday. If Bold Fact swerves away his chance there should still be a Cecil juvenile winner in the shape of Chester House. The Goodwood winner scored on his debut rather scrappily but continues to work well and will be a short price for Tuesday's Acorn Stakes.

Desert King will be piloted by Pat Eddery now that Kieren Fallon has been too naughty on the racecourse for the liking of the filly's owner, Wasif Said. She worked well on Saturday and

galloped beautifully on Tuesday on Newmarket's Racecourse Side, fuelling the belief she can be Henry Cecil's first winner of the race since Willow in 1976. Warren Place also fields Bold Fact in the Gimcrack at the meeting, which means you should make sure there are a few people between you and the stands running rail next Wednesday. If Bold Fact swerves away his chance there should still be a Cecil juvenile winner in the shape of Chester House. The Goodwood winner scored on his debut rather scrappily but continues to work well and will be a short price for Tuesday's Acorn Stakes.

Desert King will be piloted by Pat Eddery now that Kieren Fallon has been too naughty on the racecourse for the liking of the filly's owner, Wasif Said. She worked well on Saturday and

galloped beautifully on Tuesday on Newmarket's Racecourse Side, fuelling the belief she can be Henry Cecil's first winner of the race since Willow in 1976. Warren Place also fields Bold Fact in the Gimcrack at the meeting, which means you should make sure there are a few people between you and the stands running rail next Wednesday. If Bold Fact swerves away his chance there should still be a Cecil juvenile winner in the shape of Chester House. The Goodwood winner scored on his debut rather scrappily but continues to work well and will be a short price for Tuesday's Acorn Stakes.

Desert King will be piloted by Pat Eddery now that Kieren Fallon has been too naughty on the racecourse for the liking of the filly's owner, Wasif Said. She worked well on Saturday and

galloped beautifully on Tuesday on Newmarket's Racecourse Side, fuelling the belief she can be Henry Cecil's first winner of the race since Willow in 1976. Warren Place also fields Bold Fact in the Gimcrack at the meeting, which means you should make sure there are a few people between you and the stands running rail next Wednesday. If Bold Fact swerves away his chance there should still be a Cecil juvenile winner in the shape of Chester House. The Goodwood winner scored on his debut rather scrappily but continues to work well and will be a short price for Tuesday's Acorn Stakes.

Desert King will be piloted by Pat Eddery now that Kieren Fallon has been too naughty on the racecourse for the liking of the filly's owner, Wasif Said. She worked well on Saturday and

galloped beautifully on Tuesday on Newmarket's Racecourse Side, fuelling the belief she can be Henry Cecil's first winner

## sport

# Johnson is made to struggle

### Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM  
reports from Zurich

Michael Johnson, who branned a *Superman* outfit after retaining his world 400 metres title last week, looked as if he had been affected by Kryptonite last night as he struggled to hold off the challenge of seven more mortals.

The double Olympic champion, rocking with the effort in the final 10 metres, recorded a time of 44.31sec nearly a second slower than his best, to hold off his American rival Trece Washington, who recorded 44.38sec.

Davis Kamoga, of Uganda, the world's silver medallist was third in 44.43, with Britain's Roger Black, making his first individual appearance since returning from the virus infection which denied him an individual place in Athens fourth in 45.07 sec.

The crowd chanted Johnson's name afterwards, but for all his broad smiles it was a faintly desperate performance which underlined doubts about whether he has fully recovered from the injury that caused him to miss the US trials.

Colin Jackson, a surprise silver medallist at last week's

World Championships, was unable to close the gap here on the man who beat him in Athens, Allen Johnson. The American won the Weltklasse Meeting 110m hurdles in 13.13sec, with Jackson back in fourth in a time of 13.30sec.

Tony Jarrett, who went out in the World Championship heats, gave a better indication of his ability this time around by taking third place in 13.21, with Mark Crear finishing 0.01 behind his American compatriot.

The race was preceded by a B version, in which Roger Kingdom, the 34-year-old American who set a world record of 12.92sec nine years ago, won in 13.36. He is one of a long line of athletes who have responded positively to the combination here of financial incentives and intense spectator appreciation.

The meeting, with its annual budget of £2.5m, has the financial clout to make it virtually obligatory for the world's leading athletes.

Merlene Ottey, a particular favourite, raised the noise level still further in the 100m as she held off the woman who beat her in Athens, Marion Jones, and her US colleague, Gail Devers, the Olympic champion, to win in 10.96 sec.



Brooke Bennett, of the United States, powers her way to victory in the 800m freestyle at the Pan Pacific Championships in Fukuoka, Japan, yesterday

Photograph: Reuter

## Such ado as lott and Croft face inquiries

### Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE  
reports from Chelmsford  
Glamorgan 301-8  
Essex 303-9  
Essex win by one wicket

The image of English cricket as a box of Milk Tray without the hard centres can seldom have come closer to being shattered than it has here over the last two days. But as both Essex and Glamorgan hold inquiries into the ill-tempered scuffle that marred the first day of this NatWest semi-final, there are those who feel the incident is little more than a by-product of playing hard competitive cricket.

One who clearly upholds that particular view is Stuart Law, Essex's Australian all-

rounder and yesterday's man of the match in the home side's thrilling one-wicket victory.

"The incidents that have gone on in this match are part and parcel of the game back home," Law said yesterday. Speaking about the Croft/lott argy-bargy (which culminated in no more than a shove) he said:

"We see it as two players expressing different opinions in the heat of the moment. They are not condoned, but as long as you don't see two blocks slugging it out, we tend to let them get on with it."

Unsurprisingly, it was not a view taken by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). In a statement from Gerard Elias, the QC who is chairman of the ECB's discipline committee, the board have asked the two counties to carry out inquiries.

"Both sides were desperate to do so," Elias said. "And will hopefully issue a result by the end of the week."

With Elias vice-chairman of Glamorgan, that seems to imply some fairly tough action and both players can probably look forward to a fine in the region of £1,000.

In a week in which England lost the Ashes to Australia, there have been several disasters over first-class cricket's lack of spine, not least by Nasser Hussain, whose column this week, in a national newspaper, described the county game as "All matey and lovey dovey."

However, speaking yesterday, as acting captain of Essex, Hussain felt that the tie with Glamorgan was one of the hardest fought domestic cricket matches he had played in.

Predictably, reaction to the match, particularly to the scuffle at the end when lott appealed against the light, has

been split between the hysterical (the tabloids) and those willing to turn it off (the players).

The incident comes at a bad time for Lord MacLaurin's blueprint, particularly the highly supercharged one-day league, which will now be prey to all those who feel one-day cricket breeds obnoxious behaviour.

To make that league financially viable, MacLaurin is hoping to sell the league to television. However, television is what made the incident the ogre it never was, and what would have merely elicited an "Ooh" from the crowd in an untelevised match, has been replayed until its protagonist grew heads.

As lott pointed out after he and Croft had made up with a big hug on the pitch: "Will someone please tell my mum it was nothing more than handbags at 10

yards. She thinks I've committed a crime against the state."

With play recommencing half an hour late after heavy overnight rain, Essex, needing six runs to win, took three from the five balls remaining of Wasim Younis's ninth over. But the drama heightened when Tim Hodgson, a recent graduate from Durham University, edged the first ball of Darren Thomas to the keeper Adrián Shaw.

With three runs still wanted, Peter Such, Essex's No 11, strode to the crease. The previous evening Such had joked that if he got to the middle he would either be a chump or a chimp. With the help of one of Graham Gooch's old 3lb bats and a low full toss, it was the latter, as Thomas's fifth ball was sent scuttling for four, and Essex were back at Lord's.

TONY COZIER  
reports from Colombo  
Sri Lanka 332 and 415-7 dec  
India 375 and 281-5  
Match drawn

Neither team could find the resources to achieve victory on the final day and Sri Lanka and India had to be content with yet another draw in the second and final Test here yesterday.

Both teams could find the resources to achieve victory on the final day and Sri Lanka and India had to be content with yet another draw in the second and final Test here yesterday.

At that stage the Sri Lankans were in with a realistic chance of a rare Test triumph, but were let down by their catching and gained only two more wickets in the day. They were held up by Mohammad Azharuddin for the last three and three-quarter hours to be unbeaten on 108, his 19th Test hundred and his second in successive matches. Yet they missed two chances to dispose of him early on.

He was 12 when off-spinner Mutiah Muralitharan, who had already accounted for Rahul Dravid and Tendulkar, put down a low two-handed return. At 40, in the penultimate over before tea with the match still alive, wicketkeeper Ramesh Kaluarahana let an edge off Sanath Jayasuriya off the stump fall to the ground.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajewa de Silva, but then Savar Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for

# Swedes make Rangers suffer

## Football

**KEN GAUNT**  
IFK Gothenburg  
Rangers

obtaining plenty of possession. Durie was left holding his head in disbelief when he missed a glorious chance, sending his close-range shot wide when it would have been easier to square the ball to Negri in the middle.

Gothenburg were beginning to look uncomfortable under the weight of Rangers' attacks and they hastily cleared the ball for a corner after Tony Vidmar had picked out Alex Cleland.

Cleland was booked for tripping Robert Andersson, and then Rangers were almost caught napping two minutes before the break when Stefan Pettersson broke clear, only to hook his shot over.

That was a warning for what was to follow in the second half when Rangers were hit by two goals from the Swedish champions in the space of three minutes. The veteran Pettersson put Gothenburg ahead after 55 minutes, with the visitors guilty of some shoddy defending. Robert Andersson played the ball back to Pettersson and he rattled in a shot that thundered past Andy Goram, the Rangers goalkeeper.

Rangers were still getting their thoughts together when the Swedes added a second in the 58th minute. Goram made a valiant attempt to prevent Par Karlsson's shot going over the line from an acute angle, but the referee, Vitor Pereira, ruled that the goal should stand.

Rangers were still reeling from that double blow when they could have gone 3-0 behind on the hour. Goram spilled a shot from Andersson and the ball appeared to trickle over the line – but luckily for Rangers the referee ruled in their favour. The worried visiting manager, Walter Smith, made a double substitution after 66 minutes, bringing off Negri and Albertz and replacing them with Ally McCoist and Ian Ferguson.

Gothenburg were buoyant after going two goals ahead and again almost grabbed a third when Karlsson found himself clear in the area, only to knock his shot over the top. The third goal arrived two minutes from the end, though, when Peter Eriksson, a substitute, com-plicated the scoring.

IFK Gothenburg: Ravelin; Johnson, Ernmark, Luck, Magnusson, Andersson, Petersson, Thun, Gullberg, Vidmar, R. Andersson. Substitutes: Jansson, Henricsson, Ericsson, Martensson, Teter, Ekstrom.

Rangers: Goran; Cleland, Stenros, Ponn, R. Vidmar, Thom, Gullberg, Negri, Albertz, Durie, Victoria, Stenros, Ferguson, McColl, Moore, Miller, Gunnarsson, Arndsen.

Referee: V Pereira (Portugal).

Rangers have a lot to do if they are to reach the promised land of the Champions' League. Despite having the better of the first half, they ended up well beaten by IFK Gothenburg in last night's European Cup preliminary round first leg match at the Ullevi Stadium.

Despite the absence of their inspirational captain Brian Laudrup, who has chicken pox, the Scottish champions took the game to the home side and carved out a number of good chances. Jorg Albertz cut through the Gothenburg defence after nine minutes only to steer his shot wide, then Gordon Durie shot just wide after Stale Stensaas had set him up with a fine cross.

Rangers continued to make the running in the early stages and Thomas Ravelli was forced to race from his goal and head the ball clear, losing his cap in the process as Jonas Thern tried to find Marco Negri.

Rangers continued to dominate and must have gone in at half-time in good spirits after

## Blackburn lead the chase for Kennedy

Blackburn Rovers are likely to lead the chase for the Liverpool winger Mark Kennedy, who put in a transfer request earlier this week.

The 21-year-old Dubliner has spent two years at Anfield without becoming a first-team regular. If Liverpool agree to let Kennedy go, Rovers can be expected to bid for his services.

They can certainly afford him, having raised £13m by selling seven players since Roy Hodgson's arrival - £10m in the last week. Kennedy, who cost £1.5m when he arrived from Millwall, is expected to cost around £2m if Liverpool decide to let him go. Blackburn may face opposition from Wimbledon, who tried to sign Kennedy in the summer, and may renew their interest.

Arsenal's Patrick Vieira and Matthew Upson have been suspended for three matches after the Football Association received official notification of their dismissals against PSV Eindhoven in a pre-season friendly in the Netherlands on 30 July.

The bans start on 25 August, which means they will miss Arsenal's north London derby



John Barnes walks into his new home at St James' Park yesterday

Photograph: PA

## Redknapp may put Rieper move on hold

Marc Rieper's projected £2m move to Celtic could be delayed if the West Ham manager Harry Redknapp decides he needs further reinforcements before the deal can go through.

The 29-year-old Danish defender was expected to make the switch from Upton Park to Parkhead before tomorrow's European signing deadline. With Redknapp securing David Unsworth from Everton on Tuesday in a swap deal with Danny Williamson, it appeared the way was clear to release Rieper – but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's flattering to be linked to Celtic – but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

**Woods at the double**  
Masters champion goes after his second major, page 21

# sport

THURSDAY 14 AUGUST 1997 • THE INDEPENDENT

**Hemp in command**  
Left-hander puts Warwickshire on course for final, page 22

England pair settle their differences the morning after the night before...



Glamorgan's Robert Croft (left) and Mark Illott of Essex shake hands on the balcony at Chelmsford after Essex's one-wicket victory in the NatWest Trophy semi-final yesterday. The pair had clashed the previous evening when the players went off for bad light with Essex only six short of victory but with eight wickets down

## Barnes says sorry to unhappy Hammers

### Football

John Barnes yesterday signed for Newcastle - and then apologised to West Ham for originally telling them he would move to Upton Park.

Kenny Dalglish has signed the former England winger on a free transfer, just over 10 years since the then Anfield manager took him to Liverpool from Watford for £900,000.

Barnes, 33, has signed a two-year contract and will be available to play in the Champions League if Newcastle get through the qualifying round against Croatia Zagreb.

Barnes said: "I was very close

to joining West Ham. And before I heard of the interest from Newcastle I was virtually certain I was going to join them."

"But once I had heard of Newcastle coming in I explained the situation to Harry Redknapp, who I wouldn't have liked to criticise him for his decision. Barnes said: "I felt for myself, for my family, for my piece of mind, and to be fair to West Ham, I really had to take this decision to come to Newcastle."

"As far as I am concerned and as far as Harry is concerned, who I have spoken too, it is not much of a problem. I don't believe Harry has gone public to criticise me. He is disappointed and rightly so, it has come out badly, but Harry and I are

whole thing, the way it was actually done."

Barnes was attracted by the chance of playing European football with Newcastle, and Redknapp has refused to criticise him for his decision. Barnes said: "I felt for myself, for my family, for my piece of mind, and to be fair to West Ham, I really had to take this decision to come to Newcastle."

"As far as I am concerned and as far as Harry is concerned, who I have spoken too, it is not much of a problem. I don't believe Harry has gone public to criticise me. He is disappointed and rightly so, it has come out badly, but Harry and I are

still friends as far as I'm concerned."

Barnes said he was delighted that Dalglish was giving him a chance at St James' Park, and insisted he can still play an important role for Newcastle.

"Newcastle is a huge club, a big stage and I still believe I can perform at the very highest level," he said. "I believe I have still got a lot to offer Newcastle, or any club, but I wish to thank Newcastle for giving me the opportunity to continue my career at the highest level."

"I am coming to a club with a wonderful squad, I have much to offer but the Newcastle players here do also individually and

collectively. Kenny is an excellent manager - just look what he has done at both Liverpool and Blackburn - and hopefully what he is going to do here at Newcastle. Every club now needs a strong 18-man squad and this is the aim here. They have wonderful players here."

Barnes added he was not surprised by Newcastle's approach: "It didn't surprise me, I still have confidence in my own ability."

The transfer was announced in a statement to the Stock Exchange which said: "The Board of Newcastle United announces that John Barnes, who has been offered a free transfer by Liverpool Football Club, has

signed a two-year contract with Newcastle United. No transfer fee is payable to Liverpool."

The 73-times capped England player could make his debut in United's next Premiership fixture at home to Aston Villa on Saturday 23 August, before returning to Anfield with his new team-mates on Sunday 31 August.

The Hull City team-mates Gregor Rieley and Neil Mann are to get a ticking-off to add to their yellow cards after squaring up angrily at one another in Tuesday's Coca-Cola Cup match at Macclesfield.

The pair, whose antics came on the same night as a similar,

better publicised push-and-shove on the cricket pitch at Chelmsford, are to get away with just an admonishment from Hull's new manager, Mark Hateley.

Hateley will not be too hard

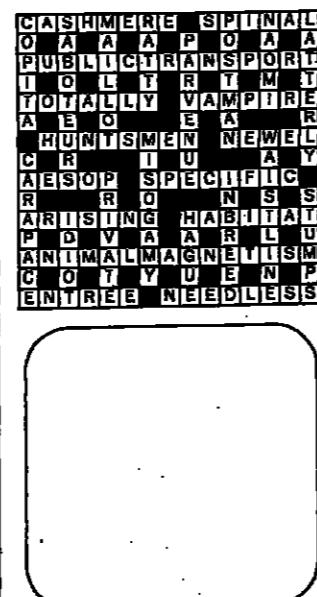
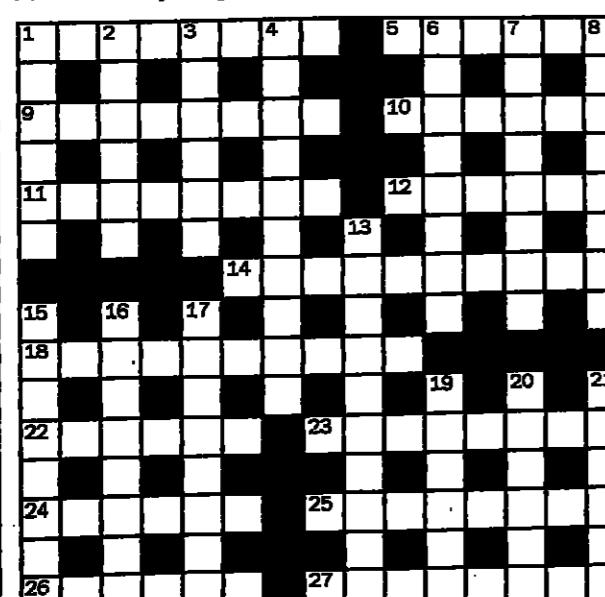
on his two players even though they were both embarrassingly booked for the incident in the first-leg 0-0 draw. "I have decided that I won't be fining them for what happened," the former England international said. "In some ways it's nice to see that sort of spirit and commitment in the side. What I did was give them both a telling-off in the dressing room afterwards, and you can be sure it won't happen again. But I think fines is going a bit too far."

The incident happened in the Hull penalty area when the pair fell out in a row about defending a cross. "The lads were both laughing about it when they came off, so there's no long-term problem - team spirit is clearly good," Hateley said.

Rieley, 22, is the son of former Bolton and Arsenal manager Bruce - a fierce competitor himself in his playing days for Derby and Aston Villa - and 23-year-old Mann's father is the former Scottish player Arthur, who played for Manchester City, Notts County and Mansfield in the 1970s.

### THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3377. Thursday 14 August By Mass



**ACROSS**

- Mount, second, lost lead (4,4)
- Is Henry absorbed by dance piece? (6)
- Cowboy feature picture about origin of Laramie (8)
- One gawping, beginner losing time (6)
- A capital character (8)
- Ruffie representative bound by policy (6)
- The type to harbour many a grouse? (10)
- Treat that! (10)
- Grave's the end (6)
- Classifies British bats (8)
- Scrapes with rasp round edges of diamond (6)
- Gathered officer's full of merit (6)
- Swell party set up on base (6)
- Subtly balanced, artist's source of light (10)
- Busybody in time gets more insolent (8)
- Ornament (Oriental, we hear), quietly trendy (6)
- Free house around East, note (8)
- Took off after game, got moving (6)
- Musical partnership (without 'Cats') sparkles (8)
- DOWN
- One running off after second athlete (8)
- Regarding lock as a defence (6)
- Light appearance of some iron, well-wrought (8)
- Mark of stress (6)
- Treat chappie with drink (6)
- Like birds in the trees (6)

Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford and Huddersfield Avenue, Oldham. Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 01983 840370. Thursday 14 August 1997 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office.

## Sydney braced for blood testing

### Olympic Games

Sydney's Olympic Games drugs chief is prepared for the possible introduction of blood testing in sport in time for 2000 but says followers of the Jehovah's Witnesses religion are providing the major hurdle.

Nicki Vance, the head of the Sydney Organising Committee, said his team would be prepared for any advances in drug testing but admitted that blood testing was an issue requiring a decision by the International Olympic Committee on moral rather than scientific grounds.

"There's been some research done and it appears from my reading that Jehovah's Witnesses may be the only group that have a problem with blood testing," Vance said yesterday.

"The Muslim religion apparently does not have a problem with it. That's one thing we'd obviously have to take into account - not only the scientific issues but also any kind of cultural or health issues."

One running off after second athlete (8)

Regarding lock as a defence (6)

Light appearance of some iron, well-wrought (8)

Mark of stress (6)

Treat chappie with drink (6)

Like birds in the trees (6)

"It's a lot different taking a blood sample with a needle than taking a urine sample - even though that may be more embarrassing it's not necessarily affecting their health in the same way."

Vance said her role would be to provide the infrastructure to support the IOC's doping commission, which was expected to take about 2000 urine tests during the 2000 Olympics. Sydney has an IOC-accredited laboratory, unlike Atlanta which needed to upgrade for the Games.

There were troubles with technology in Atlanta, where the High Resolution Mass Spectrometer made a controversial Olympic debut. Five samples which turned up positive on the machine for anabolic steroids in Atlanta had to be discarded, and the head of the International Amateur Athletic Federation doping commission, Arne Ljungqvist, said last month that the method was not 100 per cent reliable.

Vance admitted that the war

against performance-enhancing drugs was a difficult one to fight. "It's unfortunate of course that athletes try to find ways to cheat the system and as we catch up with incorporating things like out-of-competition

programmes to compete with anabolic steroid use we are now looking at substances which are impossible to find in the urine with the current technology."

"Now there may well be new technology that finds ways to detect these substances in urine or they may find that the new technology requires blood sampling. We will have a blood testing contingency plan; we will be right on top of that issue."

Vance said the Sydney laboratory had one High Resolution Mass Spectrometer and would purchase "a couple more" for the Olympics. She said the key was to be ready to use whatever technology existed at the time of the Games and to keep track of advances in testing for drugs more contemporary than anabolic steroids, such as human

growth hormone (hGH), erythropoietin (EPO) and testosterone.

EPO and hGH cannot be detected by standard urine tests, while there is confusion on how to judge excessive testosterone.

Women's water polo, canoe slalom and trampolining are still in contention for the 2000 Olympics, organisers said yesterday. The Sydney Games Sports Commission chairman, John Coates, said he supported a six-team women's water polo competition if the number of players in each men's squad was reduced from 13 to 11. He said the international water polo governing body had agreed to the move.

Slalom canoeing could be held in what was scheduled as a rest day in the gymnastics. The SOCOG general manager for sport, Bob Elphinston, said all three sports probably needed to win approval from the International Olympic Committee at next month's session in Lausanne.

Japan's Olympic officials yesterday selected the city of Osaka, the commercial hub of western Japan, as the nation's candidate to stage the 2008 Olympics. Osaka, which is 25 miles west of Tokyo, estimates it will cost £950m to stage the games over 17 days from 25 July to 10 August. The city, Japan's third largest, has a population of about 2.5 million. The International Olympic Committee is to decide the host for 2008 in 2001.

In 1964 Tokyo became the first Asian city to host the summer Games. Sapporo, a city in northern Japan, held the 1972 winter games. The 1998 Winter Games will be held in the central Japanese city of Nagano.

## Townsend turns down Bath and may join Cardiff

### Rugby Union

Gregor Townsend, the Lions stand-off, yesterday rejected a six-figure offer to join Bath. Cardiff are now favourites to secure the Northampton and Scotland player's services. He has promised them a decision by today, having met senior club officials earlier this week.

Bath would have added 24-year-old Townsend to a back di-

vision that already includes the England international trio of Mike Catt, Jeremy Guscott and Phil de Glanville. But they could not guarantee him the No 10 jersey, which is why he has become unsettled at Northampton where Paul Grayson holds that position.

"This has got nothing at all to do with money," Bath's assistant coach, Clive Woodward, said. "He wants to join a club who can guarantee him the fly-half position, and unfortunately, we could not do that."

Cardiff's offer is a rumoured £500,000 over three years, with no transfer fee involved. There is an apparent clause in Townsend's Northampton contract which states that the Saints will not receive any money if he joins a club in another country. But Northampton are likely to oppose his proposed move all the way, with their multi-millionaire owner, Keith Barwell, warning

that High Court action is a possibility.

Swansea have put a £1m price tag on their Wales and Lions centre, Scott Gibbs. And All Whites warned off Northampton, who are keen to reunite 26-year-old Gibbs with his Lions coach, Ian McGeechan, at Franklin's Gardens for the new campaign.

London Welsh have announced a £500,000 cash injection which could herald the start

of another golden era at Old Deer Park. A 10-strong business consortium, including the club's former Wales and Lions flanker John Taylor, signed official documents yesterday following weeks of discussion.

Around 1,200 club members will also be invited to take up a share option in the new London Welsh plc, with Taylor forecasting a possible £100,000-plus windfall from that venture.

£12m f